

The Biography of Muḥammad

Nature and authenticity

Gregor Schoeler

Translated by Uwe Vagelpohl

Edited by James E. Montgomery



Routledge Studies in Classical Islam

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This book considers the Arabic biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad, the earliest of which dates from two centuries after his life. These biographies, prized by Muslims, have been approached in the Western study of Islam from a range of positions. Some scholars reject them entirely, seeing in them products of the Muslim community's idealisation of its history, while others accept them at face value, reasoning that, if not exact versions of events, the events could not have differed too much from their descriptions.

The author revisits the debate and reconsiders several key incidents in the life of the Prophet. By compiling an extensive corpus of materials and comparing them closely, this book analyses the transmission and the contents of the accounts. It shows that by understanding clearly the interaction in early Islam between written and oral modes of transmission, and by the judicious sieving of the accounts, as well as the lines of transmission, we can sometimes reach back to that generation of Muslims who though not themselves witness to the events were younger contemporaries of those who were. Establishing a solid basis for the informed study of Muḥammad's biography and adding to the ongoing debate, this book will appeal to scholars of early Islam, history and theology.

Gregor Schoeler has been the chair of Islamic Studies at the University of Basel since 1982. His recent publications include *Al-Ma'arrī: Paradies und Hölle*, Munich 2002 (German translation of the first part of al-Ma'arrī's *Risālat al-Ġhufrān*), volume 4 of the *Dīwān of Abū Nuwās*, Beirut 2003, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, London and New York 2006, and *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, Edinburgh 2009.

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The nature of the historical period in which the emergence of Islamic civilization occurred has produced vigorous scholarly debate. While the general impact of the newly formed Arab empire on pre-existing cultures is evident to historians, establishing the varied trajectories of the transition from pre-Islamic times to the period in which the establishment of an Islamic social, political, administrative and cultural order is a matter of significant discussion. *Routledge Studies in Classical Islam* is dedicated to the best scholarship on that period, revealing the difficulties and the complexities in establishing the history of the time. Focusing on the Arab and Persian worlds up to the tenth century, the series includes original textual sources in translation, modern scholarly works not previously available in English, and newly commissioned works dedicated to examining the period critically in light of the evidence that is available to historians today. Every work in this series focuses on the question of ‘how do we know’ when it comes to establishing the history of this controversial period, producing a persuasive body of insightful scholarship as conducted in the academic community today.

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Foreword

The life of the Prophet Muḥammad, the founder of the world religion that is Islam, is a matter of the utmost scholarly significance. It is a subject which generates interest in the widest circles and its significance surely needs no explanation. Biographies of historical personalities must rely on physical remains (i.e. archaeological sites, coins, epigraphy) and/or sources. No such 'remains' with specific Islamic characteristics survive from the period and the geographical regions in which Muḥammad was active. The sources which are extant come in the form of texts which, apart from the Qur'ān and a few non-Islamic testimonies, were compiled no earlier than two centuries after Muḥammad's death.

A striking feature of the most recent scholarship on these texts is the attempt to demonstrate that these sources are more or less historically nugatory. According to one theory, as brilliant as it is misguided, and one which finds its supporters even to this day, these sources constitute a salvation history, pure and simple, a history which can consequently only be the subject of literary and not historical research.

This theory, and ones like it, have exerted an enormous influence on the direction of more recent research. Some scholars argue that we should use only *non-Islamic* sources, for these are earlier than the Islamic sources; but they provide virtually no information about the life of Muḥammad. One scholar maintains that, in spite of the fact that the sources are hardly reliable and rather remote from the facts, a reconstruction of the Prophet's life, based on such sources, can nevertheless lay claim to historical probability, sometimes even to a high degree of historical probability. Others deny the very possibility of writing a biography of Muḥammad but maintain nonetheless that it is possible to describe his epoch. One scholar does deal with the life of Muḥammad, opining that, given the problematic state of the sources, applying a combination of common sense and modern heuristic devices to the traditional accounts would be the most useful and productive course of action. Thus we encounter telling titles such as 'The Quest of the Historical Muḥammad', echoing Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (the English translation of *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*). Yet other scholars concern themselves exclusively with method: they seek to prove, through the provision of statistics or similar means, that nothing which the Islamic tradition says is right.

This overwhelming concern with methodology is apparent in an edited volume devoted to the life of Muḥammad and cognate issues which appeared not too long ago: Herbert Berg's *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins* (2003). Prior to this, the sources themselves took centre stage, as we can see from the subtitle of a volume which appeared in the same series only three years before Berg's book: *The Biography of Muḥammad: The Issue of the Sources*, edited by Harald Motzki (2000).

In defiance of the current trend is the procedure of one author who – in spite of everything – has recently written a voluminous book with the title *Muḥammad*: he cocks a snook at the complex of problems pronounced on the issue of the authenticity of the early Islamic tradition and produces – on the basis of the late compilations of the ninth and tenth centuries – yet another biography of Muḥammad of a kind which is all too familiar.

The state of current research, then, is completely unsatisfactory. In my book *Charakter und Authentie* written more than ten years ago I proposed a radically different approach to the study of the life of Muḥammad. I tried to demonstrate that we could reconstruct, on the basis of the sources available, reports which go back to persons in very close contact with Muḥammad, sometimes even to eye-witnesses of the events. I argued, that these reports reflect at least the general outline of the events. In the intervening period between the appearance of that book and this, further studies have exemplified and confirmed my thesis.

Of course my book did not go unnoticed by the international academic community: it was reviewed in many languages, but still it did not gain wide currency. I expect that this is partly to be accounted for by the fact that it was not written in English. I am therefore deeply indebted to Professor James Montgomery of Cambridge. His edition of the English translation of my studies on the oral and the written in early Islam has been instrumental in enhancing the profile of a considerable part of my work. He has undertaken and brought to a successful conclusion this follow-up project, an English translation of a revised edition of the present book, which constitutes a further and possibly more important aspect of my research. I am just as grateful to Dr Uwe Vagelpohl of Berlin who once again performed the difficult task of translation with great skill and exemplary patience. It has been a great good fortune and privilege for me to have the opportunity to work once more with these two scholars.

Thanks are also due to the Degree Committee of the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge, the managers of the Wright Studentship, for financial support, to the publisher Routledge and the series editor Professor Andrew Rippin, for accepting the work as part of his series.

The text of the first edition was revised in collaboration with the Editor and the Translator and I was able to extend the basic corpus of sources in reference to works which have recently appeared, which were not available to me previously or which had been overlooked. I have also brought the overview and discussion of relevant research up to date and have availed myself of the opportunity to take into account criticisms which were voiced in the reviews of the first edition.

Truth and historical tradition

Some introductory quotations

Due to the nature of historical sources ..., we reach the limit of historical certainty when we examine these sources more closely and in a critical way. (Bernheim 1903: 175)

At this point, various doubts arise because oral and written witnesses and authors do not directly report an occurrence but only their understanding of it, i.e. what they understood to have happened and how they conceived of it. Their understandings were influenced, coloured and even distorted through the various modifications of their own personal opinions and preconceptions, voluntary and involuntary. All of these observations are valid and useful but they do not need to leave us discouraged and excessively sceptical. What they teach us is that each source has to be treated differently according to its nature and that we need to apply methodical safeguards and control mechanisms in order to discern what really happened irrespective of the modifications and distortions. ... Indeed, in some cases, we will not be able to do this with absolute certainty. (Ibid.: 176–7)

Rather than soberly inquiring how to distinguish between genuine and falsified information and ascertaining the circumstances leading to and explaining falsifications, some of the more sanguine and ingenious thinkers generalized this experience and, in an excess of scepticism, boldly asserted that entire periods of historical tradition were nothing but systematic forgeries. Coins became their most trusted sources; on this basis in particular, they reconstructed the history of the epoch in question according to what they thought likely to have happened. (Ibid.: 180)

Apparently, discarding tradition and freely sketching a radically alternative past on an empty canvas has a special appeal for these scholars. (Ibid.: 181)

Against such scepticism, we have one powerful source of support: the interconnectedness of historical events, their occurrence in continuous sequences of historical developments. The factuality of these sequences is demonstrated by the presence of their consequences in the present, by our immediate experience; and we can use the results of these historical developments as a basis to infer such past events as are necessary to explain them. (Ibid.: 183)

Thus, irrespective of our doubts about some more or less significant details, there is in all of history a broad foundation of secure and unshakeable facts. We should not overlook or underestimate this foundation just because we are accustomed to

taking it for granted. ... In view of this secure foundation, we can calmly appreciate and admit that often, as in every other science, history only offers *probabilities*, sometimes even only *possibilities*. (Ibid.: 178)

Oral tradition. This is where error has played its most detrimental role. [In this context, 'error' means] uncritically to regard as historical tradition mythical and otherwise fabulous narratives which do not contain any historical recollections or legends which reflect historical events only in a distorted manner; or, even worse, arbitrarily to accept as historical facts some details in such mythical or legendary material which seem possible or probable while stripping away anything that seems all too marvellous and improbable. (Ibid.: 349)

What we are dealing with here, then, is simply the method for recognising the ahistorical nature of legends and thus avoiding the aforementioned error ... The most important [methodological principle] belongs to the general field of source criticism. First and foremost, it requires us to refer back as strictly as possible to the oldest, comparatively best-attested and most original version of a given tradition. Next, we need to ask whether or to what degree this tradition is credibly attested. The methodological answer to this question also falls under the remit of source criticism. In addition to its *extrinsic* authentication, we have to examine the *intrinsic* plausibility of a given tradition. (Ibid.: 350–1)

Common sense has probably always followed this rule: in everyday life, in order to assess the veracity of a report, we ask the narrator whether he himself witnessed the events he relates or who his source was. Our judgment about the reliability of the report always depends on the trustworthiness of the informant. (Ibid.: 468)

Accordingly, the verdict about the reliability of a tradition largely hinges on asking whether the report is direct (a primary source) or through how many and which 'channels' it was transmitted to us ... [Customarily,] we use the term 'primary source' not just in its strictest sense for reports of immediate witnesses to an event but also for independent reports of contemporaries to an event ... If he is otherwise reliable, we can assume that an author who was himself a witness to the events reported can have direct knowledge of them. We can also assume knowledge of such events on the part of a more distant observer who has recollections of the time at which they took place and who had access to the 'living memory' of other contemporaries. Whenever an informant was further removed from the events, we have to examine the sources of his information and determine how direct and immediate they are. (Ibid.: 469)

The sources of *oral historians* are reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the lifetime of the informants. This differs from *oral traditions* in that oral traditions are no longer contemporary. They have passed from mouth to mouth, for a period beyond the lifetime of the informants. (Vansina 1985: 12–13)

Traditions about events are only kept because the events were thought to be important or significant. A selection process is already underway, starting in fact

with eyewitnesses or contemporary reports. As time passes and the criteria of importance or significance change, the selection process continues. (Ibid.: 118)

Once created, a composition to be memorized is supposed to remain unchanged from recitation to recitation, although in fact, its actual wording will vary over time. (Ibid.: 14)

Memory typically selects certain features from the successive perceptions and interprets them according to expectation, previous knowledge, or the logic of 'what must have happened', and fills the gaps in perception. (Ibid.: 5)

Thus a testimony is a tradition as interpreted through the personality of an informant and is colored by his personality. (Ibid.: 64–5)

Weakness in chronology is one of the greatest limitations of all oral traditions. (Ibid.: 56)

The historian must always be on the lookout for unconscious distortions, as well as for the obvious alterations which might have been introduced for fun, profit or esteem. Suspicions should be aroused as soon as characters conform to ideal types. ... When, however, traits or anecdotes run counter to fashion, they should be seen as reliable. These data resisted the trend to idealization. (Ibid.: 107)

The body of recent oral tradition is quite rich, quite large, and very diverse, stemming from all the genres. Selection has not yet operated much, reinterpretation has not proceeded very far, relative chronology (mostly through a host of local genealogies) is still good and sources have not been common to large numbers of people yet, so that a certain amount of independence still exists. Oral sources do not share the limitations of oral tradition, which we discussed here, and recent oral tradition – one or two generations beyond the eldest living members in a community – suffered only small damage. But as traditions are older, the problems become bigger, to be at their peak when one deals with traditions of origin. This is the reason why traditions of origin are usually chosen as examples when such effects are discussed though they are not typical. (Ibid.: 192–3)

... even eye- and earwitness reports have a tendency to impose on events certain traditional motifs and narrative conventions which conform to the expectations of the audience, i.e. to re-shape real events in accordance with oral traditions and thereby also to distort them ... Our memory retains more information about specific events than we can remember at one time, but it selects and modifies the content of our recollections. As a rule, we only remember firstly what seems familiar and secondly what seems to make sense; the unfamiliar is altered until it becomes familiar. Unintentionally and without us noticing, histories are manipulated in accordance with the interests, knowledge, likes and dislikes and the states of mind of their narrators. Hence, histories become ever more similar to their narrators. (Röhrich 1988: 90)

... the compilations, which are not simply fictions, contain a wide range of traditions, both 'good' and 'bad' ones. (Noth 1968: 295)

A central argument ... will continue to be that the tradition offers much material which, if in need of careful examination, is still of historical value for the early period. (Noth 1994: 24)

Great civilizations may not easily give up the secrets of their formative eras, but do not lose sight entirely of the momentous events and ideas which brought them into being. (Ibid.: xi)

Introduction

1. The present work

This study differs from my articles on early Islamic tradition¹ not only in terms of subject matter and scale, but also scope. I have expanded the scope of my research to include, in addition to the *nature* of tradition (the focus of the first two chapters of this study), the problem of *authenticity*, which will be dealt with explicitly in the third and to a certain extent in the second chapter.

Most importantly, I will not confine myself to examining Arabic biographical literature – though it will be used in the first chapter² – but will, in addition, study in particular two Medinese traditions or complexes of traditions on their way from their (real or alleged) original informant to those compilers who included them in works extant today. (For practical reasons, I will start with these latter works and move back in time.)

In analysing the biographical material and through the diachronic study of separate traditions, my primary concern is to distinguish and explicate the successive stages in Medinese transmission. While my articles focus on the nature of the sources of the major compilations of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries, e.g. al-Buḥārī, Muslim, aṭ-Ṭabarī – I have established that these were for the most part aide-mémoires, collections of lecture notes, and writings in the category of ‘literature of the school (exclusively) for the school’³ – the present study examines the nature of transmission until, during and after the time of the first generation of collectors in the second half of the first century AH, personalities such as ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (d. 94/712 or shortly thereafter) and Abān ibn ‘Uṭmān (d. 96/714 or slightly later).

My second concern is the question of the *authenticity* of early Islamic tradition. It is connected to, but not identical with, the question of its nature. An outline of what I do and do not understand by the term ‘authenticity’ is vital from the outset, even though to do so will anticipate a central finding of my investigation. By ‘authentic’ I do not wish to imply *necessarily* that the events described in these traditions took place exactly as depicted. We have to take into account both the chronological hiatus between the earliest reports and the reported events (i.e. some 30–60 years), and any distortion introduced through the perspectives of the narrators. Such interference notwithstanding, we can entertain the hypothesis that such accounts, based as they are on the reports of eye witnesses, or (at the very

2 Introduction

least) on contemporary reports, reflect, approximately, the main outlines of the actual events, and sometimes perhaps even a few details.

Furthermore, I do not propose that the further transmission of a report, from the collector (e.g. 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr) to the diverse compilers of the extant works (e.g. Ibn Ishāq, al-Buḥārī, aṭ-Ṭabarī), occurred without any consequences for the wording (and sometimes also the content) of the tradition. Rather we must reckon with a 'modification process' which many traditions underwent. However, when a report exists in more than one transmitted version, I hold that we can, by comparing and establishing the intersections (i.e. the shared material) of the texts, reconstruct, partly or in its entirety, something which approximates to its original version.

Therefore, in this book, 'authentic' will be used to describe traditions which were demonstrably collected and disseminated, in a systematic process of teaching, by historical individuals from approximately the last third of the first century AH. Chains of transmitters of such 'authentic' traditions indicate historical genealogies of teachers and students: they have not come into existence through the 'raising back' of isnāds.

First, let us recall the basic fact that forms the starting point of the debate. With the exception of the Qur'ān, which contains little by way of information about Muḥammad's life and times,⁴ all the extant Islamic sources (at least the literary ones) originated a long time after the events. A few *non-Islamic* sources appeared earlier (even in the first century AH) but tell us next to nothing about the life of the Prophet. Virtually all our knowledge of Islamic origins is thus based on transmitted accounts, i.e. traditions.⁵ The definitive redaction of these accounts did not take place until the third/ninth and fourth/tenth century; thus, the transmission process took 150–250 years before the material was redacted in the works we possess now. How reliable is this transmission?

It is true that, in terms of the precision and fidelity of preservation of its texts, the transmission of material in the early Islamic teaching system is not in any way comparable to the exclusively oral, verbatim transmission,⁶ over the course of more than one millennium, of the Hindu *Vedas*⁷ and the Persian *Avesta*.⁸ The Indo-Iranian and the Islamic systems should actually be thought of as two different types of mnemonic preservation. The main difference is that the Muslims did not develop a specific method of relaying texts verbatim (e.g. mechanical rote learning or specific mnemonic techniques) for their tradition (history, *ḥadīth*, Qur'ān commentary).⁹ In this respect, they were at a disadvantage not only compared to Hindus and ancient Iranians, but also to the second-century Jewish scholars (*tannaīm*), who had to repeat word by word *mišnah* passages they had learned by heart in their schools.¹⁰ The transmission methods of early Muslim scholars (*ulamā'*) were in this respect even inferior to those of the transmitters (*ruwāt*) of ancient Arabic poetry, who – in spite of the liberties they took and were expected to take in recitation and dissemination – were required to know their material more or less exactly, their task facilitated by the metre and rhymes of the poems.¹¹ Yet, we should not automatically classify the free form of transmission customary in early Islamic historical and legal/dogmatic tradition as flawed and inadequate. A fully

faithful transmission accurately reproducing each aspect of the material in question might not even have been intended.¹²

A fully verbatim oral transmission (which, however, was always accompanied by a written transmission) became predominant only in respect to one text: the Qur'ān, the book with the highest authority. Even here, verbatim transmission was preceded by an (admittedly brief) period of 'freer' transmission.¹³

Thus, the only method developed in early Islam to ensure a certain degree of precision in passing on historical and legal/dogmatic *ḥadīth* material was the use of written records, which became more and more widespread after the first century AH. But literacy does not automatically or necessarily guarantee authenticity and precision – written material can be as easily manipulated and forged as oral tradition.¹⁴ Irrespective of how closely related these two problems are, the question of authenticity cannot automatically be equated with the issue of the *written* or *oral* nature of transmission: on the one hand, oral transmission does not always lead to inaccuracy, and on the other, written records do not always imply authenticity.

2. On the reliability of the tradition: From the nineteenth century to c. 1980

The reliability of the entire early Islamic historical tradition, especially the *Sīrah*, the biography of the Prophet, has already been the subject of thorough debate in the first quarter of the last century.¹⁵ Sceptics, such as L. Caetani¹⁶ and H. Lammens,¹⁷ invoked Goldziher's (at the time generally accepted) wholesale rejection of the entire *religious* tradition (i.e. legal and dogmatic *ḥadīth*) and applied his point of view also to the early *historical* tradition.

Lammens claimed¹⁸ that *ḥadīth* (in the strict sense), *tafsīr* (Qur'ān exegesis) and *sīrah* (biography of the Prophet) shared the same source material; he even maintained that almost the whole *sīrah* material was a product of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*. In other words, the life of Muḥammad was, according to Lammens, made up of biographical reports which were nothing other than freely invented interpretative material inspired by Qur'ānic allusions. For the Medinese period, on the other hand, Lammens accepted a vague historical tradition.¹⁹ Contrary to this extreme view, T. Nöldeke²⁰ and C. H. Becker²¹ took a moderate stance vis-à-vis the usefulness of historical tradition. Becker pointed out that Lammens only quoted traditions supporting his claim (for Lammens, a Catholic priest, those in which Muḥammad appears in a bad light) and discarded whatever material conflicted with it (traditions in which Muḥammad appears in a positive light). Nöldeke demonstrated on the basis of specific examples that, often enough, Caetani and Lammens went too far with their scepticism.

Caetani's and Lammens' position continued to exert some influence even in the second half of the last century: its impact on Blachère's *Le Problème de Mahomet*²² is unmistakable. Schacht expressed scepticism with regard to Islamic historical traditions similar to that voiced by Lammens.²³ However, his starting point was not Lammens' claim, with which of course he was familiar; rather, he

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tried to apply his own findings on the origins of Muslim jurisprudence²⁴ to the *sīrah* genre.

Until the 1970s, however, Nöldeke's and Becker's moderate views were predominant, as we can clearly see in the source critical remarks of the important Muḥammad biographies by F. Buhl,²⁵ W. M. Watt²⁶ and R. Paret.²⁷ The same situation obtains in the field of *sīrah* and Ibn Ishāq research proper. From the first quarter of the twentieth century, we have the studies of J. Horowitz²⁸ and J. Fück;²⁹ from the second half, works by A. Guillaume,³⁰ W. M. Watt³¹ and R. Paret³² (to name only those scholars important for our study).³³

A second round of the debate on the reliability of the early historical tradition in Islam took place in the 1970s and 1980s. It was heralded by a dispute between A. Noth and Ursula Sezgin about reports covering the time of the early caliphate (and therefore not related to *sīrah* material). Since the issues brought up in their discussion were similar to those we are dealing with in the context of the *sīrah*, I will sum up their respective arguments.

Noth,³⁴ who specifically deals with Wellhausen's 'school theory',³⁵ proceeds by analysing separate traditions on the early Islamic conquests. He observes that the traditions were subjected to a process of 'falsification'³⁶ on their long journey from the original informant to the compiler. These falsifications – or rather modifications – come about through summarization, systematization, amplification, abridgement, false chronological and factual arrangement, omission, invention and similar manipulations.³⁷ In the course of the transmission process, we often observe the emergence of *topoi*, recurrent stereotypical narrative motifs.³⁸ On the other hand, Noth emphasizes that there are not only 'bad', but also 'good' traditions;³⁹ in spite of his pronounced scepticism, he stops short of rejecting the early Islamic historical tradition as a whole.⁴⁰

Noth's ideas have exerted a substantial impact on subsequent research in the field of early Islamic historiography. Interestingly enough, its influence was more widespread in Anglophone than in German scholarship. Consider these two examples of authors adopting and extending his approach.

E. Landau-Tasserion has demonstrated on the basis of an episode from the *sīrah* that substantial alterations of historical material were not only caused by tendentious falsification, but by the process of redaction itself (especially in the case of al-Wāqidī).⁴¹

L. Conrad has explained the emergence of wholly ahistorical reports on historical events (here: the conquest of Arwād Island⁴² as described by aṭ-Ṭabarī and al-Wāqidī), which consist of little more than collections of *topoi*.⁴³ He was able to examine older Syriac Christian sources, which were chronologically closer to the events and were more faithfully related than in Muslim historiography. In view of our own analysis of material originating from al-Wāqidī, it should be pointed out that Landau-Tasserion's and Conrad's findings are in large part determined by the very fact that they chose texts by al-Wāqidī.

Noth's results were criticized by Ursula Sezgin,⁴⁴ who had published a study of her own⁴⁵ of the Islamic historical tradition concerning the early caliphate. For present purposes, let us simply concentrate on one aspect of their dispute: their

respective assessments of the passage of separate traditions from the original informant to the compiler. According to Sezgin, we have no reason to posit a ‘falsification process’. She admits that the truth of the original informant’s account – her material frequently consists of (true or alleged) eyewitness reports – is not always above reproach; she does not deny attempts at embellishment, extenuation or similar forms of tampering. But after this first phase, texts were transmitted according to a system which ‘was conditioned on faithful transmission’.⁴⁶ According to her, ‘this means that they [scil. the authorities of the compilers] are bound to their [scil. their transmitters’] wording, which could not be altered without being duly noted’.⁴⁷

For the later transmission process (after Abū Miḥnaf, d. 157/774), however, she acknowledges the occurrence of shortenings and abridgements, which, she adds, could give rise to a certain bias.⁴⁸ In addition, she notes that the faithfulness of transmission which was posited by the system was not always adhered to in practice.⁴⁹ These qualifications go some way to putting into perspective the apparent opposition between her own and Noth’s views. In her sources, Sezgin did not find any parallel traditions to the Abū Miḥnaf reports she examines; she is thus unable to give any definite answer to the question of the accuracy of transmission from the original informant to Abū Miḥnaf.⁵⁰

The discussion of the issue of reliability was vehemently pursued in the 1970s and 1980s with the publications of the extreme ‘sceptics’: J. Wansbrough,⁵¹ P. Crone⁵² and M. Cook.⁵³ There were reactions from J. van Ess⁵⁴ and in particular W. M. Watt⁵⁵ and R. B. Serjeant.⁵⁶ Whereas Lammens, as Becker remarked, was not at all consistent in his scepticism (because he discarded only a part of Muslim tradition, i.e. the material in which Muḥammad appears in a positive light!) and whereas Noth had not excluded the existence of genuine, ‘good’ traditions, the sceptics felt compelled to reject almost the whole body of early Islamic tradition.⁵⁷ For example, Wansbrough dismisses the Islamic account of the redaction of the Qur’ān text in its entirety.⁵⁸ On the basis of separate examples, Crone maintains that Islamic tradition is unrealistic, full of contradictions, inconsistencies and anomalies.⁵⁹ She explains this situation on the basis of a combination of historical circumstances (radical religious, political and societal changes following the emergence of Islam) and transmission methods (oral dissemination of short sayings and reports).⁶⁰ According to Crone, professional narrators (*quṣṣās*) are to be blamed for modifying and embellishing the material which passed through their hands.⁶¹ Cook observes that there are no objective criteria for authenticity in the study of early Islamic literature (first and second centuries AH).⁶² Both scholars frequently emphasize that, in order to recognize historical truth, we have to consult sources from outside the Muslim sphere (‘external’ evidence), such as archaeological artefacts or non-Muslim texts.⁶³

Before the emergence of the controversies outlined above and still in reaction to the ‘Lammens-Becker position’,⁶⁴ Watt made a preliminary attempt to confirm the historicity of the main events related in the *Sīrah*.⁶⁵ Twenty years later, on occasion of the Strasburg Colloquium on the life of the Prophet, he again took up

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this idea, now explicitly referring to the recent controversy concerning the reliability of the whole corpus of sources for the early history of Islam.⁶⁶

According to Watt, there is a basic framework of the *Sīrah* which he calls ‘*maǧāzī* material’. It consists of the following information: ‘the list of *maǧhāzī* or expeditions, the group against whom each was directed, the leader and the number of participants and in some cases their names, the results, and the approximate date and relative chronological position; in the case of major events ... also ... an outline of the battle or other event’.⁶⁷ This material lies at the basis of Ibn Iṣḥāq’s *Sīrah* and provides its chronological framework. Before being collected and organized by the scholars, the relevant reports, which Ibn Iṣḥāq usually (!) presents without *isnād*, were preserved collectively by the community or at least by some Muslims.⁶⁸ This material had always been generally accepted and deemed reliable. It is to be sharply distinguished from anecdotes about less significant details of the various expeditions inserted into the framework by Ibn Iṣḥāq and invariably equipped with an *isnād*. It is possible that these anecdotes (which usually deal with minor details of the event and which we could classify as *ḥadīṭs*), could frequently be spurious. This material, however, has not been used to any appreciable extent in any of the great European biographies of Muḥammad. The main fault Watt ascribes to Lammens and Becker – and latterly to Cook and Crone as well – was not to have made this fundamental differentiation between (authentic) *maǧāzī* material and (dubious) *ḥadīṭs* and anecdotes.

Specific aspects of Watt’s thesis – however plausible it may seem at first blush – are open to criticism. For example, the chronological framework cannot be classified as belonging to the ‘*maǧāzī* material’: in his fundamental study of Ibn Iṣḥāq, Fück had already pointed out that the chronology was in large part the work of Ibn Iṣḥāq himself.⁶⁹ Conclusive evidence can be found in a work not available to Watt but which has been edited in the meantime: the *Kitāb al-maǧāzī* of Ibn Iṣḥāq’s contemporary Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid (as transmitted by ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Hammām a generation later), which lacks a consistent chronological framework.⁷⁰ In addition, Watt’s ‘*maǧāzī* material’ occasionally contains remarks by Ibn Iṣḥāq himself on the events in question or a summary in his own words of the content of the following tradition or chapter (consisting of a number of traditions).⁷¹ On the subject of the (alleged or real) absence of *isnāds*, we should add that the *maǧāzī* material is not always presented without a chain of transmitters.⁷² Although it seems to be the case that, in the *Sīrah* (Ibn Hišām’s recension of Ibn Iṣḥāq’s work), the documents (the constitution of Medina)⁷³ and lists (e.g. the participants and victims⁷⁴ of the battle of Badr)⁷⁵ are invariably cited anonymously by Ibn Iṣḥāq,⁷⁶ some cases of *maǧāzī* material without *isnād* in the *Sīrah* could be the result of an intervention on the part of Ibn Iṣḥāq’s redactor Ibn Hišām, who might have deleted the *isnād*. For a number of passages, this can be demonstrated.⁷⁷

The idea that there was something akin to an authentic ‘basic framework’ of the *Maǧāzī* is not new. Paret showed that the line Ibn Iṣḥāq – az-Zuhrī – ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr documented genuine teacher–student relationships, not a ‘raising back’ of *isnāds*, and that ‘Urwah, as the son of one of the Prophet’s earliest

followers, had at least indirect access to events taking place during the lifetime of the Prophet.⁷⁸

Paret's student J. von Stülpnagel applied this approach further in his unpublished and therefore largely unnoticed doctoral thesis.⁷⁹ He maintains that the traditions of 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (transmitted mainly by his student az-Zuhrī and his son Hišām to scholars of the following generation, including Ibn Ishāq) are a 'useful foundation ... for research on the life of Muḥammad'. He adds: 'One could even say that for this particular field (scil. the *Sīrah*), the central traditions, which even today serve as the most important piece of evidence, originate from 'Urwah's collection.'⁸⁰ Furthermore, von Stülpnagel himself addressed the question of authenticity and provided some suggestions as to how spurious traditions in the 'Urwah corpus could be recognized and weeded out.⁸¹

Another attempt to single out historical elements in the *Sīrah* was made by R. Sellheim.⁸² He developed a 'stratification theory', according to which we can discern three layers in Ibn Ishāq's material placed one on top of the other: (1) historical events; (2) legendary material; and (3) fallout from factional or dogmatic conflicts. In part, the historical layer is identical with Watt's '*mağāzī* material', it covers the lists and main events of Muḥammad's Medinese period.⁸³ Additionally, it includes passages Watt had assigned to a different – although explicitly designated as authentic – class of material, namely 'documentary material', e.g. the constitution of Medina. Furthermore, Sellheim wants to add descriptive passages he regards as 'detailed and close to reality'.

Sellheim's 'stratification model' is open to criticism. First, it confuses rather than clarifies: the *Sīrah* text does not contain 'layers' stacked on top of each other; rather, we have (in the case of 'layers' 2 and 3) *tendencies* which have entered, permeated and altered historical reports ('layer' 1).⁸⁴ The existence of these tendencies had already been pointed out by Nöldeke⁸⁵ and Horowitz⁸⁶ (who incidentally quoted more or less the same examples Sellheim uses). It has been accepted for a long time that the embellishment of Muḥammad's biography with miraculous events began very early, even though it accelerated over the centuries: reports of divine intervention and angelic apparitions may belong to the oldest 'layer' of the tradition.⁸⁷

In addition, the 'stratification theory' neither clarifies nor solves the authenticity issue. It only shifts the problem to another question: what material belongs to the historical 'ground layer'?⁸⁸ On this issue, scholars' views differ widely. Sellheim wants to include all the material classified as historical since Nöldeke, while Crone admits little more than the constitution of Medina.⁸⁹ In the end, Sellheim has to acknowledge that he cannot offer a simple solution to the authenticity problem.⁹⁰

M. Kister⁹¹ and some of his students, particularly M. Lecker,⁹² have been much more successful in their attempt to reach the oldest strata of traditions about the life of Muḥammad. They have unearthed and studied a number of *ḥadīths* and reports which are at odds with later dogmatic thinking about sensitive theological issues; the material thus collected is highly likely to be old and in parts also authentic. Kister and his students followed an approach already suggested by

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J. Fück. In his classical study ‘Die Rolle des Traditionalismus im Islam’ (‘The role of traditionalism in Islam’), he used the same method to argue for his idea of ‘an authentic core of Islamic tradition’.⁹³ However, Kister did not go beyond studying individual traditions and did not furnish a general theoretical account of his method.⁹⁴

Debates about reliability intensified considerably after the publication of P. Crone’s *Meccan Trade*. R. B. Serjeant’s scathing and insulting review⁹⁵ was met by Crone with a fierce, but objective and measured rejoinder.⁹⁶ I do not want to get involved in particular arguments here; what I am interested in is the discussion of methodological questions pertaining to the study of ‘oral’ tradition.

Serjeant,⁹⁷ like Watt before him,⁹⁸ appeals to the following methodological principle of historical science: ‘Methodologically, we cannot but start from the premise that a Tradition is a genuine report of “fact” until it is creditably shown to be false, or partially or wholly invalidated by palpable bias.’ He accuses Crone of ignoring this principle. In her rejoinder, she maintains that, while the rejection of Islamic sources had been her premise in her first book, *Hagarism*, it had been her conclusion in *Meccan Trade*, resulting from careful examination: her analysis of the sources had led to a negative verdict on their credibility.

Somewhat earlier, Cook had commented on the said principle as follows:⁹⁹ ‘Yet it may equally be the case that we are nearer the mark in rejecting whatever we do not have specific reason to accept.’ Who is right: Watt and Serjeant or Crone and Cook? Is it possible to treat traditions transmitted over generations without any specific technique or method for verbatim preservation (e.g. the accurate copying of manuscripts, or mechanical rote learning) on an equal footing with ordinary historical sources? Is it not the case that such reports are closer to legends and myths, for which we can only postulate a historical nucleus once we have ‘external’ evidence available, e.g. from archaeology (as was the case with the Trojan War)?

There is no doubt that Becker – and Nöldeke – adduced powerful arguments for their moderate position. But in the end, Becker had to admit that ‘intelligent criticism is particularly difficult to refute, because historical intuition is here confronted with historical intuition’.¹⁰⁰ A similar verdict seems to be the result of the second ‘round’ of discussions. ‘Historical intuition’ may caution many observers against the wholesale rejection of earlier ascriptions¹⁰¹ as practised by Wansbrough, Crone, Cook and their epigones and point towards a ‘kernel of truth’ in Islamic tradition; on the other hand, the subsequent disputes merely demonstrate how difficult it is to find persuasive arguments against extreme scepticism.

3. On the reliability of the tradition: Recent trends

In the following section, I will offer an overview of the contemporary trends and current lines of inquiry into the reliability of the sources on the life of Muḥammad, by reviewing a sample of studies which seem to me particularly important or representative:

Today, the two sides of the debate are frequently distinguished by their attitude toward the sources for early Islamic history:¹⁰² ‘traditionalists’ or ‘sanguine’

scholars on the one hand, ‘revisionists’ or ‘sceptics’ on the other.¹⁰³ The most frequently mentioned ‘*imāms*’ of the former are F. Sezgin and W. M. Watt,¹⁰⁴ sometimes together with N. Abbott and M. M. Azami.¹⁰⁵ The ‘*imām*’ of the latter is J. Wansbrough, closely followed by P. Crone and M. Cook.¹⁰⁶ The younger generation of revisionists brand themselves as ‘new sceptics’. F. Donner regards this new scepticism as something akin to a scientific paradigm that has superseded the earlier ‘tradition-critical’ paradigm associated with Goldziher, Noth, Kister and his school. He considers H. Lammens as a precursor and J. Schacht as the first exponent of the new scepticism.¹⁰⁷

‘Sanguine’ scholars or ‘traditionalists’¹⁰⁸ are those scholars who attach some historical value to the traditional sources about the life of Muḥammad in spite of the fact (which they too do not dispute) that these sources underwent changes in the process of transmission. In a nutshell, they regard the outlines and most important events of the traditional biography of Muḥammad as historically accurate.

‘Revisionists’ maintain that our sources about the early history of Islam almost exclusively reflect the opinions and concerns of later generations. They dismiss the traditional biography of Muḥammad as largely or completely fictitious. Thus, it is emblematic that one representative of the ‘revisionists’ had reprinted, in a volume edited by him and published in 2003, a public lecture held by Wansbrough in 1986 in which the latter summarized his position as follows: historical sources about the seventh century Ḥiǧāz are (purely) literary and exegetical; traditional accounts of early Islamic history have to be read as salvation history; the study and interpretation of such accounts is a matter for literary criticism, not historiography.¹⁰⁹

The brand of scepticism advocated by Wansbrough and Crone/Cook¹¹⁰ – a position they, we should remind ourselves, did not invent but revived in the late 1970s, supported with new arguments and put at the centre of an international scholarly debate – was further developed in the 1980s and 1990s. Recently, this scepticism has assumed an even more radical shape. J. van Ess has rightly criticized the arrogance of some of its exponents who attempt to pass off their position as the only intelligent interpretation of the sources.¹¹¹ Positive publicity and favourable reception with the public at large, as a result of articles published in the press, sometimes give the (wrong) impression that the ‘new sceptics’ are the dominant force in historical research on the early history of Islam.

Wansbrough still operated with the vague figure of an Arab prophet who, at some time or another, was credited with a number of anonymous *logia*. In *Hagarism*, Crone and Cook did not go so far as to deny the existence of Muḥammad as a historical person, even though they downgraded his historical importance and dismissed key reports from the traditional *Sīrah* as ahistorical. However, some ‘new sceptics’ such as Nevo, Koren and Ohlig go so far as to regard the Prophet of Islam as entirely fictitious.

We can discern several strands within ‘new scepticism’, of which I would like to mention here those associated with S. Bashear, F. E. Peters, N. Calder, J. Koren and Y. D. Nevo, G. R. Hawting, Ibn Warraq, W. Raven and H. Berg.

Some sceptics (Ibn Warraq, Raven) do little more than compile all of the previous arguments against the historical value of Islamic literary sources about the life of Muḥammad (and the first two centuries AH, on the whole).¹¹² Others (Berg, Calder) add a few new arguments derived from their own research but remain fully committed to the paradigm introduced by their ‘masters’.¹¹³ Calder¹¹⁴ tries to undermine the traditional account of authorship and geographical origins of some early Arabic works (e.g. Mālik’s *al-Muwattaʿa*’ and ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *al-Muṣannaḥ*) by pointing out that their written transmission (rather, their dissemination by way of the accurate copying of manuscripts of finalized works) started relatively late and that they are only extant in diverging recensions.¹¹⁵ These scholars are all but exclusively interested in methodological considerations; some of them operate with statistical analyses, which are of dubious value and sometimes easily refuted,¹¹⁶ philological work, apparently regarded as an ignoble scholarly pursuit, is rarely in evidence.

Other revisionists (Nevo/Koren, Ohlig), ‘discarding tradition and freely sketching ... on an empty canvas’, outline ‘a radically alternative past’,¹¹⁷ sometimes on the basis of their idiosyncratic interpretations of numismatical, epigraphical or other ‘external’ evidence. They follow the model of the ‘*imāms*’ who applied the same methods. Nevo and Koren who studied early Arabic inscriptions from the Negev claim that the absence of specifically Qur’ānic phrases in these early inscriptions confirms Wansbrough’s ‘late-dating’ of the final redaction of the Qur’ānic text.¹¹⁸

U. Rubin advances a strand of scepticism that is more or less immune to scholarly criticism. He explicitly relinquishes the study of ‘hard facts’ and confines himself to tracing the image of Muḥammad in his community. He undoubtedly succeeds in this undertaking in his book *The Eye of the Beholder*.¹¹⁹ At the same time, however, he – wrongly, in my opinion – maintains that ‘the belief in a “hard core” of historical facts’ has its origins in (and is little more than) a ‘nineteenth-century fetishism of facts’.¹²⁰

Revisionists also count Noth among their ancestors and allies – wrongfully, in fact: he finally vehemently rejected their accolades.¹²¹ In the second edition of his book *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislamischer Geschichtsüberlieferung* (English title: *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*), he stressed again ‘that the tradition offers much material, which, if in need of careful examination, is still of historical value for the early period’.¹²² The same applies to L. Conrad, Noth’s co-author for the second edition of the book, and to several exponents of the Jerusalem school (Kister, Lecker, Landau-Tasseron).

The successes of English-speaking sceptics, especially the praise received by their ‘*imāms*’, naturally inspired imitators outside the Anglophone world, particularly in France and Germany. French scholars had a model of their own in R. Blachère’s *Le Problème de Mahomet*,¹²³ with which the author made an independent contribution to the sceptical paradigm.¹²⁴ However, the more recent French exponents of this position, A.-L. de Prémare and J. Chabbi, were obviously motivated by the desire to create their own, ‘Francophone’ counterpart to the achievements of English-speaking sceptics.

Chabbi maintains that a biography of Muḥammad is ‘impossible’¹²⁵ and subsequently explains that M. Cook¹²⁶ had already suggested some of the ‘questions of principle’ (‘questions de principe’) she discusses. De Prémare, deeply impressed by Wansbrough’s ideas, displays a strange ambivalence toward early Islamic sources.¹²⁷ On the one hand, he thinks that a historical biography of Muḥammad – which may be impossible to produce – is not even required for an understanding of the origins of Islam; in fact, he refrains from compiling one. On the other, he does not want (or is unable) to dispense with the sources, even though he regards them as biased: he intends to use them to ‘capture some of the elements guiding the emergence and formation of Islam’.¹²⁸ M. Rodinson had himself failed to establish a stable methodological foundation for his use of the early Islamic source material which he regarded as ‘hardly reliable’ and ‘rather far away from the facts’.¹²⁹ This did not prevent him from writing a great biography of Muḥammad, which subsequently became a classic. The writings and ideas of de Prémare and Chabbi have not however become part of the international debate.

Entirely without scholarly merit are the publications of K.-H. Ohlig, a German ‘revisionist’.¹³⁰ He freely admits that he is unable to read the relevant primary sources (because he does not know Arabic and other source languages) but goes on to claim that his lack of qualifications enables him to avoid ‘certain preconceptions (*Engführungen*)’ and ‘opens his eyes for critical inquiry’.¹³¹ Following Nevo/Koren, he denies the historicity of Muḥammad. In addition, he dates the genesis of the core (*Grundstock*) of the Qur’ānic text to the eighth century AD, strangely in eastern Iran or in Iraq. He claims that the (allegedly misnamed) *hiğrah* calendar, for which early ‘external’ evidence does exist, is calculated on the basis of the victory of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius against the Persians, even though the decisive battle took place six years later in 628, not in 622. According to Ohlig, the name of Muḥammad in the inscription in the Dome of the Rock (‘Muḥammad is God’s servant and messenger’) and other early relics (such as coins or monuments) and sources is in reality an epithet of Jesus (‘the blessed one’, ‘the praiseworthy one’), even though the earliest confirmed reference to Muḥammad in a non-Islamic source dates to 640.¹³² Ohlig calls the method that led to these claims ‘historical-critical’ and complains that it has so far not been applied in Islamic studies.

Like the sceptics, those scholars labelled as ‘traditionalists’ or ‘sanguine’ (G. H. A. Juynboll, H. Motzki, M. Muranyi, M. Lecker, G. Stauth, K. Versteegh, E. Whelan and I myself are often mentioned, among others) also fall into several groupings. For a number of them, Juynboll, Motzki and myself among them, the terms ‘traditionalist’ or ‘sanguine’ are entirely out of place. In fact, Juynboll followed the scholarly tradition inaugurated by Schacht while Motzki and I advocate the tradition-critical approach. The same applies for M. Schöller, who made an important contribution to the discussion with his studies on the history of conflict between Muḥammad and the Jews of Medina.¹³³

T. Nagel is one exponent of a genuinely ‘traditionalist’ approach. He has recently published two monographs about Muḥammad,¹³⁴ only one of which I will discuss: *Mohammed: Leben und Legende (Muḥammad: Life and Legend)*, an

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enormously erudite,¹³⁵ 1000-page biography of the Prophet. However, the initial happiness about a work that seems to resume the venerable German tradition of research into the life of Muḥammad soon dissipates: even though he discusses current research on a few pages,¹³⁶ Nagel is seemingly unaware of some fundamental findings of recent scholarship, especially concerning the history of transmission. He appears knowingly to ignore the results of important new studies that are at odds with his theories.

Nagel maintains that we have to pierce the ‘veil of the unhistorical’¹³⁷ to approach or comprehend the historical facts of early Islam.¹³⁸ This veil consists of a tendency to de-historicize the person of Muḥammad (‘The Destruction of History’)¹³⁹ on the one hand and certain ‘legendary formation principles’ postulated by Nagel on the other, most importantly the ‘demotion of Mecca to the categorically bad’.¹⁴⁰ According to Nagel, Muḥammad himself started this process of historical misrepresentation that altered historiography from its very beginning. By factoring in the ‘formation principles’ pervading our sources and by subtracting the distortions caused by them, Nagel hopes to recover the actual events. In addition, the author paints an extremely negative picture of Muḥammad; his entire book is pervaded by an extremely critical attitude towards Islam.

Nagel overestimates the influences of the tendencies he describes – for one, there is no evidence for his alleged de-historicization or elevation of the figure of the Prophet in ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr’s corpus of historical traditions and letters (addressed to the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik!)¹⁴¹ – and underestimates the impact of other modifications in the course of transmission history such as ‘un-directed’ and redactional changes to texts.¹⁴² For example, he naïvely renarrates the events of Muḥammad’s conflict with the Jews of Medina according to the versions transmitted by the late compilers Ibn Hišām and al-Wāqidī¹⁴³ without taking into account Schöller’s relevant studies.¹⁴⁴ Schöller discovered ‘unorthodox’ traditions (mostly on the authority of Ibn al-Kalbī), which describe the events in a very different manner than the ‘orthodox’ reports. They deserved to be taken into account as much as the ‘orthodox’ ones in any attempt to find out ‘what really happened’ (‘wie es eigentlich gewesen’).¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, recent scholarship has confirmed the old hypothesis¹⁴⁶ that, unlike *ḥadīth* compilations, the *sīrah* works by Ibn Iṣḥāq and al-Wāqidī contain much material transmitted by popular storytellers (*quṣṣās*),¹⁴⁷ a fact that substantially compromises their historical reliability.

Nagel’s account of events, often mere renarrations of the reports of the later compilers, relies on the assumption (refuted by Noth)¹⁴⁸ that we can uncover ‘what really happened’ by comparing and weighing up against each other the various reports recorded in ninth- and tenth-century compilations. He disregards the fact that, first, the later compilations he uses contain a substantial amount of *qāṣṣ* material; and secondly, that they quote reports that have undergone a long process of modification and were also redacted by the compilers themselves. Given these circumstances, it seems highly unlikely that these sources can be used as a basis for far-reaching theories such as Nagel’s hypothesis of pervasive historical misrepresentation.

One of his most catastrophic errors is his highly positive assessment of al-Wāqidī: Nagel maintains that the latter can be regarded as an almost ‘modern’

historian who allegedly applied methods similar to contemporary empirical standards.¹⁴⁹ However, the fact of the matter is that al-Wāqidī collected and compiled (i.e. wrote up) reports of wildly varying quality from any number of sources.¹⁵⁰ He studiously fails to mention his main source, Ibn Ishāq, a fact already well-known to Wellhausen and Horowitz,¹⁵¹ and other sources (Mūsā ibn ‘Uqbah, Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid), which we are only now in a position to identify.¹⁵² Also, he frequently, but not always, supplies false *isnāds*.¹⁵³ To his credit, he created a comprehensive account of the *mağāzī* with genuine literary qualities which led to the subsequent emergence of numerous pseudo-historical works falsely attributed to him (*Kitāb futūḥ aš-Šām*, *Kitāb futūḥ Mišr*).¹⁵⁴ Contrary to Nagel’s thesis, al-Buḥārī’s *ḥadīṭ* collection, a work that should be fully subject to Nagel’s de-historicization of history, contains two books on the biography of the Prophet which are as historically reliable – if not more so – than any of the *sīrah* works of the eighth or ninth century.¹⁵⁵

Even though Nagel advances some good arguments against the position of some of the sceptics in an excursus,¹⁵⁶ his book, which operates with a methodology that we cannot help but call ‘pre-critical’, is unlikely to contribute to a refutation of the ‘new scepticism’. In what follows, I propose to outline some promising approaches and ideas that have already been successfully deployed toward just such a refutation.

4. A paradigm shift?

In terms of the philosophy of science, we could call the new scepticism a ‘paradigm’ (as understood by Thomas S. Kuhn).¹⁵⁷ In general, the life-span of paradigms is short: they are soon ‘exhausted’ and can finally only ‘explain problems for which the solution is assured’. The end of a paradigm’s life span is mostly heralded by a crisis: expectations are disappointed, anomalies occur, more and more new phenomena resist explanation. There are signs that the paradigm of ‘new scepticism’ has now reached this stage. Among the critical symptoms are statements by renowned experts, especially also by former exponents of the paradigm, and recently discovered evidence such as inscriptions, coins and papyri.

Only three years after publishing his much-quoted article ‘The quest for the historical Muhammad’,¹⁵⁸ in which he expressed his unreserved pessimism about our ability to establish any hard facts about early Islamic history, F. E. Peters (1994) wrote – according to Patricia Crone – a thoroughly ‘traditional’ study about the Prophet.¹⁵⁹ R. Hoyland, a former student of Crone and now the pre-eminent authority on non-Islamic sources about early Islam, re-examined the non-Islamic sources Crone and Cook quoted in *Hagarism*. He shows that they are hardly suitable to support an alternative account of early Islamic history; on the contrary, they frequently agree with Islamic sources and supplement them.¹⁶⁰ A few years ago, Crone and Cook themselves publicly repudiated the central hypothesis advanced in *Hagarism*.¹⁶¹ In their most recent publications, leading historians of early Islam such as F. Donner¹⁶² and C. Robinson¹⁶³ strike a decidedly critical note when it comes to the ‘new scepticism’.

Among the recent epigraphical, papyrological and numismatic findings challenging the neo-sceptical paradigm, the following should be mentioned:

- ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ġabbān’s discovery in 1999 of the oldest Islamic inscription to date,¹⁶⁴ the graffito of Qā’ al-Mu’tadil (north-west Arabia). After the *basmalah*, it runs: *anā Zuhayr katabtu zaman tuwuffiya ‘Umar sanat arba’ wa-‘išrīn*, ‘I, Zuhayr, wrote [this] at the time of ‘Umar’s death in the year 24 [644–5]’. Interestingly enough, the author already uses the *hiğrah* dating, only a few years after its introduction (between 634 and 644). More interestingly, even sensationally, the graffito mentions ‘Umar (undoubtedly the second caliph) with his exact year of death. Hitherto, scholars have assumed that there was no evidence for any of the Prophet’s companions in external sources; Mu‘āwiyah was regarded as the first caliph to be safely attested as a historical figure by such testimonies, both epigraphical and manuscript (in papyri).¹⁶⁵
- The two earliest known papyri with a *hiğrah* dating, both of which originated in the year 22/643.¹⁶⁶
- We find the first attestation of Muḥammad in an Islamic setting on two Arabic-Sasanian silver coins from the year 66 and 67 AH; in the margin, they feature an abbreviated form of the Islamic profession of faith (*bi-sm Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*).¹⁶⁷ Thirteen or fourteen years later, the name Muḥammad is mentioned as a *nasab* (patronym) on a coin from the year 80 AH with an Arabic inscription¹⁶⁸ which bears the name of the Umayyad general ‘Abd al-Raḥmān *ibn Muḥammad* (better known as Ibn al-Aš‘at). Both Ibn al-Aš‘at and his father Muḥammad (d. 41/661) were important historical figures and are well known from Islamic historical sources.¹⁶⁹ This fact refutes Ohlig’s ludicrous claim that in first century AH sources, especially the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock, the word Muḥammad (written MḤMD) is not a personal name but an epithet of Jesus (without any reference to the Islamic Prophet) and should be translated as ‘the praiseworthy one’ or ‘the blessed one’. The first non-Islamic document to mention the Prophet is even older: a Syriac-Christian chronicle written around 640 (according to Hoyland) by Thomas the Presbyter refers to ‘a battle between the Romans and Muḥammad’s Arabs’ (*tayyāyē d-Mḥmt*).¹⁷⁰
- Inscriptions with an obviously Islamic content (including Qur’ānic phraseology) occur earlier (starting 31 AH) than previously thought.¹⁷¹
- A very old, fragmentary Qur’ān manuscript, the ‘Codex Parisino-Petropolitanus’, recently discovered and recognized as a historical document of paramount importance by F. Déroche. On the basis of its writing style and archaic orthography (e.g. *qāla* consistently written as QL), he dates it to the third quarter of the first century AH.¹⁷² Like the fragments of an ancient Qur’ān manuscript from Ṣan‘ā’,¹⁷³ its text follows the ‘Uṭmanic recension. This crucial piece of evidence conclusively puts to rest Wansbrough’s hypothesis that it was not until the year 800 that the Qur’ān assumed the form we know today.

So much for the external evidence which confirms at least some details of the Islamic historical tradition about early Islamic history. This book, however, deals with the Islamic historical tradition itself. More and more representatives of recent scholarship are prepared to admit that, in addition to ‘bad’ reports, Islamic tradition also contains ‘good’ ones. Thus, they distance themselves from the ‘sceptical paradigm’. However, some of them claim (wrongly, as we will see shortly) that ‘what is lacking is a method of extracting that priceless ore from the redactional rubble in which it is presently embedded’¹⁷⁴ or that ‘no one has yet proposed a reasonable way of distinguishing between authentic and inauthentic’.¹⁷⁵ The author of the last statement, C. Robinson, qualifies his claim in a footnote by admitting that he considers the so-called *isnād-cum-matn analysis*¹⁷⁶ ‘promising’.

5. Cutting the Gordian knot?

For the historical traditions at least, there seems to be a way out of our dilemma: applying and further developing the approach suggested by Noth.¹⁷⁷ He argues that separate traditions or complexes of traditions are the best starting point for research.¹⁷⁸ The most convincing of all the attempts to isolate authentic traditions presented above seem to me to be those of Paret and von Stülpnagel. It is therefore advisable to start with traditions transmitted by Ibn Iṣḥāq (or Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid) – az-Zuhrī – ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, since this chain indicates a historical genealogy of teachers and students and thus offers the best chance of providing authentic material.¹⁷⁹

Each selected tradition will be analysed diachronically. To explain my approach, I need to digress a little.¹⁸⁰ It is generally acknowledged that we can almost always recover the content of Ibn Iṣḥāq’s underlying text from reports transmitted on his authority which are preserved in the compilations of later authors (e.g. aṭ-Ṭabarī, Ibn Hišām or al-Uṭāridī). (Below, we will find that we can sometimes even reconstruct the very wording of sections of Ibn Iṣḥāq’s text.) It can be shown that an analogous procedure allows us to reconstruct at least the approximate content of reports going back to az-Zuhrī (d. 124/742)¹⁸¹ a generation earlier, or even the approximate content of reports going back to ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (d. 94/712 or a few years later).

The probability of identifying reports ascribed to ‘Urwah as ‘authentic’, i.e. as actually going back to him and of inferring or reconstructing their approximate content, is especially high with those reports which were independently transmitted by both ‘Urwah’s student az-Zuhrī as well as his son Hišām ibn ‘Urwah (and/or a third transmitter).¹⁸² This is the case for a substantial amount of traditions from the ‘Urwah corpus.¹⁸³

The different shapes of those versions of the same report, which are only to be expected thanks to the abovementioned ‘modification processes’, can serve as evidence for the independence of the two lines of transmission: certain characteristics often allow us to tell whether one of two related texts imitates the other or whether both are derived from a shared archetype.

With 'Urwah's reports, we have reached the original (collector) source of the tradition in question; at the same time, we have arrived in the first century after the *hiğrah*. Therefore, it is not true that we cannot cross over the magical threshold to the first century AH.¹⁸⁴ By comparing other (unsuspicious) material to 'Urwah traditions which have been demonstrated to be authentic, we sometimes find ourselves in a position to identify additional authentic traditions.¹⁸⁵

What about 'Urwah's own sources? Not infrequently, the *isnāds* of 'Urwah's traditions stop with his name. But in many cases, they lead back further to 'Ā'iṣah, the Prophet's wife and 'Urwah's aunt; in some cases also to one or (seldom) even two other witnesses.¹⁸⁶ Verification becomes impossible at this stage: occasionally, an *isnād* seems to have originally stopped with 'Urwah, only to be 'raised' at a later date back to 'Ā'iṣah or some other authority. For example, the chain of transmitters for some traditions in Hiṣām ibn 'Urwah's version breaks off with 'Urwah, while continuing to 'Ā'iṣah in az-Zuhrī's version.¹⁸⁷

With Paret,¹⁸⁸ therefore, we have to admit that there is a gap in the earliest Islamic tradition between an event (occurring, say, in the year 10/631–2 or slightly earlier) and 'Urwah's activity as collector (probably from about 44/664, when 'Urwah was about 20 years old).¹⁸⁹ All in all, we are talking about a hiatus of some 30–60 years.

Yet, we have to recall (again with Paret)¹⁹⁰ that 'Urwah still had the opportunity to consult eye witnesses and contemporaries of many of the events in question – irrespective of whether he mentions his informant in the *isnād* or not. For this reason, it is much more likely that he asked his aunt 'Ā'iṣah about many events she had witnessed, especially one embarrassing affair in which she herself was involved (the so-called slander or scandal story, *ḥadīṭ al-ifk*), than that he disregarded her testimony. In addition, he was able to collect first-hand reports on numerous incidents occurring (slightly) before, during and after the *hiğrah*, e.g. the *hiğrah* itself (including the 'first *hiğrah*' to Abyssinia and the circumstances and events leading to the *hiğrah* proper), the Battle of the Trench and al-Ḥudaybiyah.¹⁹¹ In their attempt to discover the truth, historians have to account for the fact that these texts may have already been altered because of the chronological gap between the narrator and the events and/or the narrator's perspective; the personal involvement of the latter can also colour or even render his reports substantially biased.

Still, it remains the case that it has been shown that *recent* oral tradition – dating back one or, according to new findings, sometimes even two generations after the death of a group's oldest living members – has normally suffered only slight damage.¹⁹² At the very least, such traditions are not to be judged like myths or legends relayed by generations of transmitters.¹⁹³ From recent traditions such as that provided by 'Urwah concerning the *hiğrah* and Muḥammad's Medinese period, the main outlines of events and even a few details can still be recovered.

This, then, is the answer to the extreme scepticism of Wansbrough, Crone and Cook and their epigones. The attitude of Wansbrough's *Quranic Studies* and Crone's and Cook's *Hagarism* is but one instance of a tendency which, every now and then since the days of humanism, seems to take centre stage in European

historiography. In his *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode (Introduction to Historical Methodology)*, Bernheim described it as follows:

early on in the process of closely criticising historical authors, scholars soon found out that their statements about one and the same event often enough contradicted each other; instead of trying to find out if they could still discover the truth or if there were ways to eliminate the sources of error they had detected, they carried scepticism to extremes by claiming that, due to the unreliability of transmission, there was no way at all to obtain valid information about the past ...

Rather than soberly inquiring how to distinguish between genuine and falsified information and ascertaining the circumstances leading to and explaining falsifications, some of the more sanguine and ingenious thinkers generalized this experience and, in an excess of scepticism, boldly asserted that entire periods of historical tradition were nothing but systematic forgeries. Coins became their most trusted sources; on this basis in particular, they reconstructed the history of the epoch in question according to what they thought likely to have happened ...

Apparently, discarding tradition and freely sketching a radically alternative past on an empty canvas has a special appeal for these scholars.¹⁹⁴

If there is anything we can reproach Wansbrough, Crone and Cook with, it is their disregard for this ‘principle of sound methodology’ as formulated by Bernheim.

However, just as Becker admitted that Lammens had roused him and his generation and had put the *Sīrah* issue on an entirely new footing,¹⁹⁵ we should acknowledge that these ‘critical thinkers’ have reminded us of some key characteristics of early Islamic tradition:

- On their long passage from the original informant to the compiler of any given work, traditions have undergone a reshaping process (Noth).
- The (absolute) chronology in extant historical sources does not preserve knowledge transmitted from ‘antiquity’; the dates in question are conjectures made by scholars from the generation of Ibn Ishāq or al-Wāqidī or, at the earliest, az-Zuhrī (Noth), some of which were based on wrongly interpreted Qur’ānic allusions (Crone). Thus, varying and wrong dates in historical sources should not come as a surprise.
- Certain traditions, especially some accounts which concern pre-*hiğrah* events are legendary and contain *qāṣṣ* material (Crone), even if transmitted by authorities as reliable as ‘Urwah (e.g. the tradition concerning the first revelation experience, but not that on the two *hiğrahs*!). They should therefore be handled with utmost care.
- Credible details, if extracted from legendary contexts, should in principle not be taken to be historical (Crone).
- Finally, to give a concrete example, *isnād* analysis *alone* is not sufficient to date a tradition (Cook) or securely to pinpoint a transmitter’s or redactor’s source.

Noth, Crone and Cook certainly deserve credit for having brought these problems to our attention and for having reminded us of many others.

6. Procedure

Before we embark on our text analysis, here are a few words on the procedure and tools employed in this study. At the beginning of each examination of a tradition, I will depict its various lines of transmission in a diagram, starting with their (true or alleged) original informant down to the various compilers, who have included it in their works.¹⁹⁶ For the moment, I will assume that the transmitter on whom the different lines of transmission converge (the *common link* of that tradition) disseminated the tradition by systematic teaching – no more, no less. The validity of this hypothesis stands or falls on the reliability of the *isnāds*; we will only regard it as confirmed if it tallies with the subsequent analysis of the text of the tradition (*matn*). In other words: dependencies between different versions of a longer tradition extant in several transmissions (recensions or versions) can often be detected on the basis of a comparison of the *texts* (*mutūn*), independently of their *isnāds*. A stemma indicated by an *isnād* can only be accepted if it agrees with a stemma suggested by an examination of the different texts (*mutūn*).

For the two tradition complexes studied in this book, I will demonstrate that az-Zuhrī must have passed on the traditions in question to numerous students – as we are led to expect by their respective *isnāds*. His predecessor ‘Urwah had already disseminated the traditions. This can be shown to be highly probable for one of the complexes we will study below (the tradition concerning the first revelation experience) and certain for the second (the scandal story). As long as they are verifiable, the details Ibn Ishāq provides about his sources will be shown to be correct. However, it is safe to say that the *isnāds* given by al-Wāqidī have frequently been consciously tampered with or forged, as will be shown by our examination of two examples.¹⁹⁷

Al-Wāqidī tries to conceal the fact that he used Ibn Ishāq’s *Kitāb al-mağāzī* throughout as the main source for his work. This finding, already noticed by two eminent experts on al-Wāqidī, Wellhausen and Horowitz, was disputed by the editor of al-Wāqidī’s *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, J. M. B. Jones.¹⁹⁸ He maintained that in many cases, in which al-Wāqidī’s version is ‘too similar’ to Ibn Ishāq’s, he did not plagiarize the latter’s work; rather, they both relied on a shared pool of *qāṣṣ* material. Recent research – including that of Crone and Cook – generally seems to have followed Jones’s opinion. It is therefore all the more remarkable that Juynboll, based on *isnād* analyses in his study of the *ḥadīṭ al-ifk*, came to suspect that al-Wāqidī, in contrast to the *isnād* information he furnishes, in fact simply copied Ibn Ishāq’s version.¹⁹⁹ Only a comparison of the texts of the two traditions enabled him to confirm his suspicion. With this step, however, he moved beyond the limits of *isnād* analysis.

In the following text analyses, I will demonstrate that besides Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāqidī drew on other sources for his version of the *ḥadīṭ al-ifk* without referring to them either in the *isnād* or elsewhere. This is only possible through a

comparison of al-Wāqidī's text with *all* extant traditions relating to the event, compiled in an exhaustive corpus.

In sum, to assess the dependency of a transmitter or compiler on his source, it is most emphatically not sufficient merely to analyse an *isnād*. Our chance of success is substantially greater if we assemble a full corpus of available material on an event and, in addition to *isnād* analysis, carefully compare the texts ('*isnād-cum matn*-analysis').

1 The main Medinese transmitters

Learning and teaching – the use of writing

The systematic study of early Islamic history (primarily the life of the Prophet, based on the collection of reports about it) began with the first generation of ‘successors’ (*tābi‘ūn*) in ‘his’ city, Medina.¹ It is true that, according to Muslim tradition, some of Muḥammad’s contemporaries made notes of his sayings² and acts;³ one of them is reported to have written down an entire speech (*ḥuṭbah*).⁴ But reports about such occasional records, if they are to be believed, cannot be read as evidence for a truly systematic effort. Such an effort involved deliberately asking various people, especially surviving companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥābah*), about his life and deeds and compiling these reports in some way.⁵ It was only begun by younger representatives of the first generation of successors (*tābi‘ūn*) who had not themselves met Muḥammad, around the last third of the first/seventh and the early part of the second/eighth centuries. Sons and grandsons of the earliest believers, ‘prevented by fate to take part in contemporary political life and estranged from the affairs of the wider world, turned to the study of a glorious past’.⁶

The reports they gathered from various informants and then passed on to inquiring fellow believers were called *ḥadīṭ* (initially always in the singular), ‘narration’, ‘account’. This is in fact the original meaning of the word, which later came to be used in a more restricted sense.⁷

These activities, which were not limited to historical studies,⁸ soon developed into systematic teaching which usually took place in the mosque of Medina. There, the earliest scholars spread their ‘knowledge’ (*‘ilm*, often used in the same sense as *ḥadīṭ*⁹) to contemporaries with a thirst for learning (‘students’) by way of lectures and answers to their questions. The emergence of ‘academic’ instruction, which in the following generations attracted believers from the entire Muslim world to Medina and soon radiated to other urban centres, came about for a number of historical reasons, among which were: the conclusion of the first wave of conquests; the eclipse of Medina’s political role after the Battle of al-Ḥarraḥ in 63/683; and the end of the second civil war (60/680–72/692).¹⁰

1.1 ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr

One of the first and certainly the most important of these early ‘historians’ was ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr.¹¹ He was born to a family of noble stock between

23/643–4 and 29/649 and probably died in 94/712–13. His father was the prominent prophetic companion and cousin of Muḥammad, az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām, who died in the Battle of the Camel (36/656); his mother a daughter of the caliph Abū Bakr; his brother (some 20 years his elder) was the famous anti-caliph ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr; his maternal aunt was ‘Ā’iṣah, the favourite wife of the Prophet. ‘Urwah is said to have transmitted reports from all his relatives – especially ‘Ā’iṣah – and many other companions of the Prophet and members of the successor generation (e.g. ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar, ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abbās, Abū Hurayrah, ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ). Muslim tradition therefore regards him as a pre-eminent authority on early Islamic history, particularly the life of the Prophet.

Of ‘Urwah’s collection activities we are told that he once sent a messenger to three companions of the Prophet, one of which was Ḡābir ibn ‘Abdallāh (d. 73/692–3 or a few years later),¹² to inquire about an event relating to the *hiḡrah*.¹³ It goes without saying that he would have consulted his aunt ‘Ā’iṣah,¹⁴ he is said to have recorded reports he received from her in writing.¹⁵

As scarce as reports about his teaching are, they are particularly valuable for the insight they give us into the very beginning of systematic instruction in Medina and in Islam in general. Of his lectures, we read that people used to come together to listen to his *ḥadīṭ* (*kāna yata’allaḡu n-nās ‘alā ḥadīṭi-hī*).¹⁶ ‘Urwah taught in public – in the Medina mosque¹⁷ – as well as in his private family circle. During ‘public’ events, he did not want his sons to interrupt by asking questions, but they were allowed to ask him once they were alone.¹⁸

He was already accustomed to reciting his *fiqh* material arranged by subjects: first came traditions on divorce (*ṭalāq*), then divorce at the insistence of a wife (*ḥul’*), then the pilgrimage (*ḥaḡḡ*) etc. – indeed a precursor of the *taṣnīf*,¹⁹ which became common practice only at a later date. His sons were asked to repeat the *ḥadīṭs* he recited;²⁰ this marks the beginning of the later institution of *muḍākarah*.²¹

In these early years, lecturing from memory was a matter of course. Tradition explicitly points out, however, that ‘Urwah possessed ‘law books’ (*kutub fiqh*), i.e. written notes of his legal *ḥadīṭs* and opinions, although he is reported to have burned them on the day of the Battle of al-Ḥarrah,²² much to his later regret.²³ According to another version,²⁴ he erased his ‘books’ (entirely?) (*maḡawtu kutubī*), because for a time, he held the opinion that the Qur’ān should remain the only book. This report also records his subsequent regret over his rash behaviour.

‘Urwah’s (temporary) rejection of written records deserves a closer look. According to this view (which was also held by others, see immediately below), the only (religious) text deserving to be preserved in written form was the word of God, the Qur’ān. Everything else, particularly the words of the Prophet, should only be recorded temporarily, if at all, to aid one’s memory. After learning them by heart, or, at the latest, before the death of their owner, such records were to be deleted or destroyed: they should not be ‘eternal’. This position occupies the middle ground between two extreme doctrines. According to one opinion, no religious ‘knowledge’ (*ilm*) besides the Qur’ān must be put into writing. This view

is traced back to the caliph ʿUmar; one of its adherents²⁵ in Medina at the time of ʿUrwah seems to have been Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab (d. 94/713).²⁶ At the other end of the spectrum, many scholars held that every piece of ‘knowledge’ could be written down without hesitation.²⁷

The position between these extremes is accorded its most prominent formulation in a prophetic *ḥadīth* reported on the authority of Abū Saʿīd al-Ḥudrī (d. 74/693 or ten years earlier):²⁸ ‘Do not write down anything from me except the Qurʾān. If anyone has written down from me anything other than the Qurʾān, let him erase it.’²⁹ Some *ḥadīth* compilations dealing with the pros and cons of written records (*taqyīd al-ʿilm*) devote a special chapter to this view.³⁰ In his *Taqyīd al-ʿilm*, al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī has an additional chapter on those who later regretted destroying their *ḥadīth*.³¹ His most prominent example is none other than ʿUrwah ibn az-Zubayr.

As we can see from the material transmitted on his authority, ʿUrwah gave accounts of all of the important events in Muḥammad’s life, thereby laying the foundations of the historiographical subdiscipline of *maġāzī*.³² The older sources do not explicitly mention whether he wrote down the historical traditions he collected. He did, however, write letters in answer to written questions by the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik. ʿUrwah’s epistles, preserved by aṭ-Ṭabarī and others, will be discussed below.³³ For the moment, suffice it to say that his correspondence illustrates a phenomenon which we will refer to as the ‘court impulse’ in this study and which has been extremely important for the written recording of the Islamic sciences and Arabic poetry.

Only very late sources credit ʿUrwah with a *Kitāb al-maġāzī* or claim him to be the first author of a systematic book on *maġāzī* (*awwal man ṣannaḥa [fī] l-maġāzī*).³⁴ This conflicts not only with the findings of European scholars about the speed of the development of Arabic written literature,³⁵ but also with Muslim tradition, which connects the emergence of *taṣnīf* in all fields (including *maġāzī*)³⁶ with the generation of Maʿmar ibn Rāšid (d. 154/770),³⁷ Ibn ʿUrwayġ (d. 150/767),³⁸ Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795–6)³⁹ and Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767).⁴⁰

We can easily explain *how* ʿUrwah came to be regarded as the author of a (systematically arranged) *Kitāb al-maġāzī*. Evidently, his students soon collected his traditions and compiled them into (*kutub*) *Maġāzī (li-ʿUrwah ibn az-Zubayr*. His foster son Abū l-Aswad Yaʿfīm ʿUrwah (d. 131/748 or later)⁴¹ is said to have disseminated a *Kitāb al-maġāzī* on the authority of ʿUrwah in Egypt.⁴² Ibn an-Nadīm⁴³ lists a book with this title by al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUṭmān az-Ziyādī (d. 243/857).⁴⁴ These ‘books’, in which later scholars collected traditions of earlier authorities, were often ascribed to the respective authorities themselves; we only have to think of the extant so-called *Tafsīr Muġāhid*.⁴⁵

If we, on the other hand, understand these ascriptions to mean that ʿUrwah – similar to his private records on *fiqh* (see above) – also possessed ‘books’ (i.e. notebooks or collections of sheets) in which he recorded his collected *maġāzī* traditions, then he most likely wrote a *Kitāb al-maġāzī*.⁴⁶ Whether they were ordered and if so, how, cannot now be determined. Due to ʿUrwah’s general disregard for chronology,⁴⁷ a fairly consistent chronological order would have been unlikely.

Even as late as ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (d. 211/827)⁴⁸ and his *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, three generations after ‘Urwah, we only find the very beginnings of a chronological arrangement of historical *ḥadīths*,⁴⁹ many of his traditions are derived from ‘Urwah via az-Zuhrī and Ma‘mar.

1.2 Ibn Šihāb az-Zuhrī

‘Urwah, regarded by some as the founder and first leader of the ‘historical school’ of Medina,⁵⁰ had many students who transmitted his traditions. One is his son Hišām ibn ‘Urwah (d. 146/763),⁵¹ another his foster son Abū l-Aswad Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, called Yafīm ‘Urwah (d. 131/748 or later).⁵² Among them, the most important is Ibn Šihāb az-Zuhrī (d. 124/742).⁵³ In addition to ‘Urwah, he studied under the pre-eminent authorities of the day (Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab, Abān ibn ‘Uṭmān, etc.) and used to question informants from outside scholarly circles, young and old – not only in public gatherings (*mağālis*), but also in the houses of the *Anṣār* in Medina. A contemporary reports that ‘he even consulted the wives (of the *Anṣār*)’.⁵⁴

Reports about az-Zuhrī’s use of writing seem to be contradictory: according to one transmitted on the authority of his student Mālik ibn Anas, he denied writing down traditions.⁵⁵ ‘Ikrimah ibn ‘Ammār (d. 159/775–6),⁵⁶ az-Zuhrī’s contemporary, writes that he along with az-Zuhrī and others came to al-A‘rağ⁵⁷ to hear *ḥadīths* from him. Al-A‘rağ made copies of the Qur’ān. In contrast to the others, az-Zuhrī at first did not make written notes. Later on, however, he wrote down a long *ḥadīth* on a piece of the same material used by al-A‘rağ for his Qur’ān copies (i.e. probably parchment), but erased it after reading it out.⁵⁸

On the other hand, we find several reports about az-Zuhrī writing down numerous traditions in the process of collection without immediately destroying them. His student Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid relates the following story⁵⁹ on the authority of another traditionist and companion of az-Zuhrī, Šāliḥ ibn Kaysān (d. after 140/757–8):⁶⁰

Ibn Šihāb (az-Zuhrī) and I met while collecting traditions (*naṭlubu al-‘ilm*). We agreed to write down the practices (of the Prophet) (*as-sunan*). We then wrote down whatever we heard on the Prophet’s authority. Later, we also wrote down whatever came from his companions ...

According to another of az-Zuhrī’s companions, az-Zuhrī used to have tablets (*alwāḥ*) and sheets (*ṣuḥuf*) on him at all times, attracting people’s ridicule; he used to write down whatever he heard.⁶¹

The contradiction between these reports is less pronounced if we picture the following development: advocating at first the widespread position that traditions should not be written down at all or only retained in writing for a short time before memorizing them, az-Zuhrī was for various reasons gradually constrained to make more and more use of written records. In what follows, this will be confirmed on the basis of additional reports.

In accordance with contemporary practice, az-Zuhrī at first transmitted his knowledge only through lectures. Naturally, students had to attend them in person. Listeners occasionally desired to gain access to his material in a more convenient manner. One of his most important students, al-Layṭ ibn Sa'd (d. 175/791),⁶² is said to have asked once: 'O Abū Bakr, if you would only write and compile these books for the benefit of the people (*law waḍa'ta ... wa-dawwanta*), you would be rid of all this labour!' Az-Zuhrī's reply was: 'Nobody has spread this knowledge farther and has been more generous with it than me',⁶³ meaning that everybody with a desire to learn his material could hear his *ḥadīṭ* from him and that a 'written edition' of his collection for students or a wider audience was unnecessary.

A report traced back to Sufyān at-Ṭawrī (d. 161/778)⁶⁴ reveals that there were valid reasons for the desire to get convenient access to az-Zuhrī's records: at-Ṭawrī once came to az-Zuhrī and wanted to hear traditions. The latter, however, was disinclined to recite. After a gentle rebuke by Sufyān ('Would you have liked to come to your own teachers and be treated like this?'), az-Zuhrī went into his house, handed him a 'book' (his lecture notes) and told him to transmit it on his authority. (This is a method of transmission which was later called *munāwalah*.) The conscientious Sufyān remarked that he had not transmitted a single letter of it.⁶⁵

From these reports, we can infer that az-Zuhrī possessed private notes which were originally only meant for his own use (lecture notes); after a while, he would pass them to others as a matter of convenience. Confirmation for the fact that he authenticated his material in a fairly careless fashion comes from other accounts.⁶⁶ He was allegedly seen to authorize transmission of 'books' (scil. containing his 'knowledge') given to him without demanding them to be heard from him or read out to him. Forced by the pressure of an ever increasing number of students, az-Zuhrī therefore used (perhaps as the first scholar to do so?) methods of transmission which in theory never gained full recognition but in practice always played an important role: *kitābah*, *iğāzah*, *munāwalah*.⁶⁷ Undoubtedly, az-Zuhrī's original position, according to which written records were to be avoided or only produced as short-term aides-mémoires, to be destroyed after use, proved to be impracticable over time. For his period, we have to distinguish between

- 1 unsystematic records for purely private purposes;
- 2 more or less elaborate lecture notes, which could be handed out to students for copying, but which were still only intended to be recited by a teacher;⁶⁸ and
- 3 writings penned for a smaller or larger circle of laypersons, i.e. for reading (in particular official collections, produced by order of the caliphal court, and for the exclusive use of the court; real 'books').

Az-Zuhrī accepted – or was unable to prevent – that his work gave rise to collections which belonged not only to the first, but also the second category; the line between the two is somewhat fuzzy.⁶⁹ Az-Zuhrī's toleration of the emergence and even production on commission of writings of the third type, however, marked an important step towards a genuinely written literature. At the time, the audience

for these writings consisted almost entirely of members of the court: the caliph, princes and attendant nobles. Collections and books by az-Zuhrī prompted by this ‘court impulse’ will be discussed below.⁷⁰

By compiling and writing down *ḥadīṭ* collections commissioned by court, az-Zuhrī breached a decades-old taboo against the production of (permanent) written religious works besides the Qur’ān. His qualms are amply illustrated by his repeated urge to justify himself.⁷¹ The best known of his explanations was that he was compelled by the Umayyads. After setting the precedent, he could not very well prohibit others from compiling permanent written (*ḥadīṭ*-) collections.

Thus, after az-Zuhrī, the opposition against recording *ḥadīṭ* in writing slowly disappeared in Medina. In spite of continuing support from certain legal scholars, e.g. Zayd ibn Aslam (d. 136/753),⁷² even az-Zuhrī’s own students no longer felt bound by it: the historian Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) and the jurist Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795–6) were among the earliest Medinese scholars to write systematically arranged works (*muṣannaḥāt*) which even had their own titles (*Kitāb al-muwaṭṭa’* and *Kitāb al-mağāzī*).

Two of az-Zuhrī’s students report that their teacher had only one or two books in his house, one a book with his tribal genealogy,⁷³ the other containing some material on his tribal genealogy and poetry.⁷⁴ The second report adds a remark by az-Zuhrī denying that he kept in his house anything written down. Yet, the *ḥadīṭ* collections (*daḥāṭir*) he wrote (i.e. dictated to scribes) by order of the court and which were removed from the library after the death of the caliph al-Walīd II (125/743) are said to have amounted to several camel loads.⁷⁵

These reports need not contradict each other: apparently, according to the opponents of written records, to which az-Zuhrī ultimately belonged, it was worse to possess and leave behind books (especially religious ones) *oneself* than to dictate or otherwise produce them and give them to others. In this context, we should remember the strong sentiment which mandated the destruction of such records (at the latest) on their owner’s death.⁷⁶

We have two roughly comparable accounts about the Baṣrian traditionist and theologian Sa’īd ibn Abī ‘Arūbah (d. 156/773).⁷⁷ He is reported on the one hand not to have owned a book and to have lectured from memory,⁷⁸ on the other, he is said to have had a scribe who accompanied him everywhere and wrote his books.⁷⁹

Az-Zuhrī specialized in *ḥadīṭ*, law and history, especially *mağāzī*. The relatively old *muṣannaḥ* work of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Hammām (d. 211/827) gives us some insight into the nature and form of the collection about the life of the Prophet which az-Zuhrī passed on to his students. ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s work contains a ‘book’ called (*Kitāb*) *al-Mağāzī*; he derived almost all of the material collected therein from his teacher Ma’mar ibn Rāšid (d. 154/770), who has to be regarded as the compiler or actual originator of this *Kitāb al-mağāzī*. Ma’mar in turn draws roughly half of his traditions from his teacher az-Zuhrī. The reports which are traced back to him are for the most part very long narratives called *ḥadīṭ*.⁸⁰ Mostly, but not always, they have an *isnād*.⁸¹ At the beginning of the text of the respective traditions, some of the more important events (e.g. Badr and Uḥud) are dated.⁸²

Yet az-Zuhrī's text was certainly not a well-ordered book unlike the one created by his student Ibn Ishāq.⁸³ Like 'Abd ar-Razzāq-Ma'mar's *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, it was probably no more than a collection of historical *ḥadīṭ* in some sort of order. But together with A. A. Duri, one could maintain that, after 'Urwah's pioneering efforts, 'Zuhrī gave the first definite frame to the *Sīra* and that he drew its lines clearly, to be elaborated later in details only.⁸⁴

1.3 Muḥammad ibn Ishāq

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767–8),⁸⁵ who was to become the most important authority in the field of *mağāzī*, studied the life of the Prophet even more thoroughly than his teacher az-Zuhrī. In addition, he also studied *fiqh*, *tafsīr* and genealogy and transmitted *ḥadīṭs* relevant to these fields.

He was taught by, among others,⁸⁶ his father Ishāq ibn Yasār and his two uncles; from his father, he received some material on the *mağāzī*. His most important teacher, however, was az-Zuhrī. In addition, he attended the lectures of a number of other eminent scholars, e.g. 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ḥazm (d. 130/747 or later) and 'Aṣim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatādah (d. 120/737).⁸⁷ Interestingly, his informants included several members of 'Urwah's family (two sons, two nephews, one grandnephew) and clients of the Zubayrid family such as Wahb ibn Kaysān (d. 127/744–5 or slightly later)⁸⁸ and Yazīd ibn Rūmān (d. 130/747).⁸⁹ For the most part, his authorities are scholars, but he also quotes 'men from family X' or 'members of the Y tribe'.⁹⁰ Converted descendants of the Jewish tribes expelled by the Prophet from Medina are said to have given Ibn Ishāq information about his respective campaigns.⁹¹ In addition, he had a reputation for transmitting from Jews⁹² and members of the *ahl al-kitāb*⁹³ in general.⁹⁴ Through research among 'the people', Ibn Ishāq extended the corpus of material which was transmitted in lecture circles at the time. One problem awaiting a satisfactory answer is the identity of those informants referred to by him as 'someone I do not suspect has told me' – the next link in the line of transmitters is generally a named and often well-known personality.⁹⁵ Ibn Ḥibbān sums up Ibn Ishāq's informants as follows: 'Because of his desire and craving for knowledge (i.e. traditions), he used to record (material) from those who were higher than him, equal to him and lower than him.'⁹⁶

Ibn Ishāq's generation in Medina no longer shied away from writing down traditions. This is explicitly noted in the context of a scandal provoked by his visits to the wife of Hišām ibn 'Urwah in order to collect knowledge (*ṭalab al-'ilm*): 'The people of Medina regard writing as permitted'.⁹⁷ Of course, students were expected to check the text of a tradition they had 'merely copied' (i.e. from a notebook) against a version they had 'audited' in a lecture course held by an authorized transmitter. This, however, did not always happen: Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal claimed that Ibn Ishāq was so keen on traditions that 'he took peoples' "books" and "inserted" them into his own'⁹⁸ (*kāna ... ya ḥuḍu kutub an-nās fa-yaḍa'u-hā fi kutubi-hī*).⁹⁹ In the same manner, Ibn Ishāq's own lecture notebooks were copied and disseminated among his students: we learn that the 'books' on *mağāzī*

and other subjects which Ibn Ishāq transmitted from his father were passed around for copying and excerpting.¹⁰⁰

In the field of *fiqh*, literacy seems to have attained such a high standard in contemporary Medina that we can already discern a ‘literature of the school for the school’. This development goes hand in hand with the remarkable emergence of books with regular titles (e.g. *al-Muwattaʿa*). The *Muṣannaf* of ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Māğīšūn (d. 164/780–1),¹⁰¹ a predecessor of Mālik ibn Anas’ *Muwattaʿa*, seems to have been disseminated quite widely in student circles: Mālik’s students brought a copy of this work to their teacher and showed it to him. Seeing the book, he felt compelled to write his own legal work, the *Muwattaʿa*.¹⁰²

The achievements of al-Māğīšūn and Mālik ibn Anas in the field of *fiqh* in Medina were paralleled by Ibn Ishāq in the field of *mağāzī*: he created a *Muṣannaf*,¹⁰³ i.e. he systematically arranged reports (*ḥadīths*) and documents about the Prophet’s life in an elaborately structured work (divided into chapters). His book easily surpasses the efforts of contemporary scholars: we now have the *Kitāb al-mağāzī* of the Yemeni (originally Baṣrian) Maʿmar ibn Rāšid (d. 154/770) in the recension of his student ‘Abd ar-Razzāq¹⁰⁴ and are able to compare it with Ibn Ishāq’s text.

In parts of Maʿmar’s *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, we find a rough chronological order in the succession of specific events in the life of the Prophet: after prehistory (digging the Zamzam well, the story of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib), we read about events in Mecca, then Medina; incidents relating to the period of the orthodox caliphs are dealt with after Muḥammad’s death; military campaigns are treated in roughly the ‘correct’ sequence (i.e. the sequence recognized in later chronologies): Badr (2/624) – Uḥud (3/625) – the Battle of the Trench (5/627) – Banū Qurayzah (5/627) – Ḥaybar (7/628) – conquest of Mecca (8/630). But the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyah (6/628) is inserted before the Battle of Badr; Biʿr Maʿūnah (4/625) occurs after the conquest of Mecca and the Battle of Ḥunayn (8/630).¹⁰⁵ In addition to the chronological order, however, we can also discern something akin to a pragmatological approach: after finishing his account of these, as it were, official events, Maʿmar goes back in time and his narration starts again before the *hiğrah* with the exodus to Abyssinia, this time concentrating on (mostly) private aspects of the Prophet’s life (e.g. the *hiğrah*, the story of ‘Ā’īshah’s slander) including his death.

Ibn Ishāq’s *Kitāb al-mağāzī* is superior to Maʿmar’s ‘book’ of the same name on several counts: it has a more consistent chronological structure¹⁰⁶ and it adds introductory notes¹⁰⁷ and comments. The former frequently date events and sum up the subsequently quoted material and the latter connect individual traditions. These and other devices produce a coherent narrative, a feature which is absent or only rudimentarily developed in Maʿmar’s text. Even more remarkable and unique for his time, Ibn Ishāq structured his material in the light of a particular concept: he integrated ‘the account of the Prophet and the new faith into the history of divine revelation since the beginning of the world’.¹⁰⁸

Subsequent Muslim scholars recognized Ibn Ishāq’s distinctiveness. Ibn Ḥibbān wrote: ‘he belonged to the people who excelled in composing coherent narratives’ (*wa[-huwa] min aḥsan an-nās siyāqan li-l-aḥbār*).¹⁰⁹ In modern

scientific parlance, Horovitz expressed the same idea as follows: ‘The material in traditions transmitted to him by his teachers, which he enlarged with numerous statements collected by himself, Ibn Ishāq compiled into a well-arranged presentation of the life of the Prophet.’¹¹⁰ Thus, Ibn Ishāq’s *Kitāb al-mağāzī* is – to use two appropriate Greek terms – more of a *syngramma* than a *hypomnēma*, even if it was not intended (originally) for written dissemination in lay circles, but for oral delivery (lecture or dictation) to his students.¹¹¹

We have some details of the transmission method used by Ibn Ishāq to pass on his own work. Yūnus ibn Bukayr (d. 199/815),¹¹² one of his students and transmitters, relates:

All of Ibn Ishāq’s narrative (*ḥadīṭ*) is ‘supported’ (*musnad*) because he dictated it to me (*amlā-hu ‘alayya*) or read it out to me (*qara ‘a-hū ‘alayya*) or reported it (from memory?) to me (*ḥaddaṭa-nī bi-hī*); but what was not ‘supported’ was recited [by a student] before Ibn Ishāq (*qirā’ah qurī’a ‘alā bn Ishāq*).¹¹³

Elsewhere,¹¹⁴ Yūnus ibn Bukayr stressed that the account in question was dictated to him word for word by Ibn Ishāq (*qāla Yūnus: kull šay’ min ḍikr azwāğ an-nabī fa-huwa imlā’ Ibn Ishāq ḥarfan ḥarfan*).¹¹⁵

A change in the mode of ‘publishing’ only came about through the ‘court impulse’. According to a frequently quoted report in al-Ḥaṭīb al-Bağdādī’s *Ta’rīḥ Bağdād*, the caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136/754–158/775) ordered Ibn Ishāq to ‘write a book from the creation of Adam to the present day’ for the crown prince, the later caliph al-Mahdī. In addition to this work, entitled *al-Kitāb al-kabīr*,¹¹⁶ Ibn Ishāq is said to have produced, also at the behest of the caliph, an abridgement (*muḥ-taṣar*) of his book.¹¹⁷

The information provided in the *Ta’rīḥ Bağdād* is confirmed and supplemented by the following report from Ibn Sa’d:¹¹⁸

Ibn Ishāq was the first to collect (*ğama’a*) and compose (*allafa*) the *mağāzī* ([the book of] the Campaigns) of the Messenger of God. He moved away from Medina at an early point [the terminus post quem is 32/749–50];¹¹⁹ none of them (scil. his students) apart from Ibrāhīm ibn Sa’d (d. 182/798 or a year later)¹²⁰ had transmitted from him. He was (later) in the Ğazīrah [142/759–60 or slightly later] with al-‘Abbās ibn Muḥammad¹²¹ and went (not much later) to Abū Ğa’far (al-Manṣūr) in al-Ḥīrah.¹²² He then wrote for him (*kataba la-hū*) the *mağāzī*. The people of Kūfah¹²³ therefore heard from [i.e. were taught by] him, just as the people of the Ğazīrah had heard from him when he stayed with al-‘Abbās ibn Muḥammad; [later,] the people of Rayy also heard from him; thus, his transmitters from these lands are more numerous than the Medinese who transmitted from him.¹²⁴

The most obvious interpretation of this text would be as follows: from his time in Medina onwards, Ibn Ishāq collected (*ğama’a*) reports about the life of the Prophet.¹²⁵ He started disseminating them in lectures in Medina (with only a small

number of students) and kept lecturing during his ten-year absence from his hometown and during his stay with the governor of the Ġazīrah, al-‘Abbās. It was only at al-Manṣūr’s behest that he recorded his collection in his exhaustive syn-grammatic historical work, the *Kitāb al-kabīr* (or *Kitāb as-sīrah*¹²⁶ or *Kitāb al-mağāzī* in the broader sense).

We cannot exclude the (never explicitly documented) possibility that Ibn Ishāq had already redacted parts of his collections – e.g. as Abbott assumes, the *mağāzī* proper – as a coherent narration and transmitted the material in this form¹²⁷ before the intervention of the caliph. But we can establish on the basis of our sources that, before the redaction for the court, the *publication* of his material was restricted to his personal lectures, whereas he now, for the first time, produced a proper book for use by lay people (albeit only a small court circle).

The new mode of publication by no means replaced the old one: according to Ibn Sa’d’s report (confirmed by other sources), after finishing his redaction – perhaps even during it – Ibn Ishāq continued to lecture on the *Kitāb al-mağāzī* or dictate it to his students; at first (unsurprisingly) in Kūfah close to al-Ĥīrah, later in Rayy. Thus, in spite of its being a *syngramma* and a systematically arranged work (*muṣannaf*) and in spite of the fact that Ibn Ishāq produced (at least one) conclusively edited copy of it for court use, the *Kitāb al-mağāzī* is only extant in the numerous, more or less substantial and more or less divergent recensions by different students. As ‘literature of the school [exclusively] for the school’,¹²⁸ it belongs to the class of works of which Nyberg once said: ‘Since they, as it were, lacked their own literary life, they were quickly lost, but the material they contained was used extensively’.¹²⁹ The fact that Ibn Ishāq held lectures on the (now edited) *Kitāb al-mağāzī* does not rule out the possibility that he transmitted further historical traditions, especially ones relating to the life of Muḥammad, which did not enter the *Kitāb al-mağāzī*. We also find traditions on Ibn Ishāq’s authority, one version of which was included in the edited book, while another was transmitted outside it.¹³⁰

Ibn ‘Adī (d. 365/976),¹³¹ an eminent *ḥadīth* scholar, approvingly comments on the beneficial effect Ibn Ishāq’s book is supposed to have had at court:

Even if Ibn Ishāq’s only merit had been to turn the rulers away from devoting themselves to useless books and direct their attention to the study of the campaigns of the Messenger of God (*mağāzī rasūl Allāh*), his mission in Mecca (*mab’at*) and the beginnings of creation (*mubtada’*), this (alone) would qualify him for the renown which he was the first to merit. Others after him also wrote systematically arranged books (*ṣannaḥa-hā*) (about this subject), but they did not reach Ibn Ishāq’s standard in this field.¹³²

The ‘useless books’ mentioned here were most probably works written by secretaries (*kuttāb*, ‘scribes’) for the caliphs since the end of the Umayyad era.¹³³ They may also have included the first translations from Greek or Syriac. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the library of the first ‘Abbāsīd caliphs contained books by ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib (d. 132/750) and Ibn al-Muqaffā’ (d. c.139/757), but no biography of the Prophet!

Of non-Arab, mostly Persian extraction, these ‘scribes’ had established themselves since the end of the Umayyad era as a second scholarly class after Arab scholars. Their works differed from the products of the latter in spirit, content and form. To a large extent, they were translations from Persian, e.g. the (lost) Arabic version of the *Ḥudāy-nāmak* by Ibn al-Muqaffa’ or his (extant) version of *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*; partly, they were original works (e.g. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd’s *Rasā’il* or Ibn al-Muqaffa’'s *Kitāb al-adab al-kabīr* and his *Risālah fī ṣ-ṣaḥābah*). These original works are also thoroughly Persian in spirit. Formally, they were proper books or epistles, i.e. finalized written works, which could be stored in the libraries of the caliph and his nobles.¹³⁴

Thus, under al-Manṣūr, the ‘Abbāsīd caliphal court was, in spite of the alleged piety of the ruling family, scandalously devoid of books on the glorious Islamic past, while it boasted of writings on pre-Islamic Persian history, fables and mirrors for princes, perhaps even the first copies of works translated from Greek or Syriac. The reason: Arab scholars were accustomed to disseminating their knowledge through lecture circles without preserving it in conclusively edited books.

Excursus: The ‘court impulse’¹³⁵

The Umayyads wished to preserve knowledge about the Arab past and to have records of the Prophet’s words and deeds in their libraries. In earlier times, they invited scholars, who either did not have any written records or did not want to part with them, to hold lectures at the court. Scribes were charged with making notes.¹³⁶ Later – from ‘Urwah’s generation onwards – we read about letters from caliphs to scholars containing questions which were answered in writing. One generation later – from the time of az-Zuhrī onwards – reports begin to inform us about large collections compiled on behalf of rulers and governors.

Mu‘āwiyah (r. 41/661–60/680) is reported to have given instructions that the (pseudo-) historical tales about Arab antiquity and early history in general, which the Yamanī ‘Abīd ibn Šaryah (d. after 60/680) would recount at his behest,¹³⁷ be recorded in writing. He is also said to have instructed a scribe to write down sayings of the Prophet recited by Zayd ibn Ṭābit (d. c. 45/666)¹³⁸ in answer to his (the caliph’s) questions.¹³⁹ Zayd, however, is said to have erased the record. While he was governor of Medina, the future caliph Marwān (r. 64/684–65/685) once reportedly expressed the desire to have a scribe record sayings of the Prophet preserved by Abū Hurayrah.¹⁴⁰

On the occasion of the conflict between the Northern and Southern Arab tribes under the Umayyads, Mu‘āwiyah’s governor in ‘Irāq, Ziyād ibn Abīhi, was credited with being the first to commission a *Kitāb al-maṭālib* (‘Book of the Evil Deeds [scil. of the Arabs]’), apparently because of the ignominies he suffered as a result of his modest, non-Arab origins. He allegedly handed the book to his son with the following words: ‘Take this (book) as a help against the Arabs, for then they will leave you alone’.¹⁴¹

Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd (r. 125/743–126/744) is said to have collected poetry and reports about the early history and genealogy of the Arabs. To that end, he seems to have asked for the records of some learned transmitters (*ruwāt*); in any case,

we learn that, once they had been copied, he distributed them to Ḥammād ar-Rāwiyah (d. between 155/771 and 158/774)¹⁴² and Ḡannād.¹⁴³

Apart from Arab history, the Umayyads were also interested in the life of the Prophet. The heir to the throne and future caliph Sulaymān (r. 96/715–99/717) is said to have ordered a contemporary of ‘Urwah, Abān ibn ‘Uṭmān (d. 96/714 or a few years later),¹⁴⁴ to write down for him ‘the life (*siyar*) and campaigns (*maḡāzī*) of the Prophet’. A written version (which Abān had already produced before Sulaymān’s order) was given to ten scribes for copying.¹⁴⁵ However, Sulaymān had the parchment leaves destroyed a little later because he wished to consult his father, the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 65/685–86/705). ‘Abd al-Malik apparently opposed *maḡāzī* stories for a long time. According to a parallel report, he ordered the burning of a *ḥadīṭ al-maḡāzī* he had seen in the hand of one of his sons (Sulaymān?) and advised him to study the Qur’ān and heed the *sunnah*.¹⁴⁶ Thus, he had originally held the view that the Qur’ān should remain the only (religious) book of Islam. Later, he seems to have changed his mind:¹⁴⁷ his interest in *maḡāzī* is documented by his written questions to ‘Urwah, answered by the latter in letters preserved by aṭ-Ṭabarī and others.¹⁴⁸

Az-Zuhrī is reported to have received a commission by the Umayyad governor Ḥālīd al-Qasrī (d. 126/743–4) to write a book about genealogy and then another one on *maḡāzī*.¹⁴⁹ A few days later, he is said to have interrupted his work on the genealogy book at the behest of al-Ḥālīd to concentrate on the *maḡāzī* material. The report does not tell us whether he finished the *maḡāzī* work. Az-Zuhrī is also reported to have written an annalistic *Asnān al-ḥulafā’*, the first work of its kind; aṭ-Ṭabarī quotes two short passages from it.¹⁵⁰

After entering the service of the Umayyads, az-Zuhrī was frequently asked to provide written *ḥadīṭ* material. For ‘Umar II (r. 99/717–101/720), he allegedly compiled a large-scale *ḥadīṭ* collection (*tadwīn*),¹⁵¹ at the behest of Hišām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 105/724–125/743), he was required to dictate large quantities of *ḥadīṭs* for the education of the caliph’s sons. In one report, we hear about 400 traditions, which he dictated identically twice from memory to a scribe with a month intervening between the two dictations.¹⁵² Another report tells us that his dictation of *ḥadīṭ* material for the princes lasted an entire year.¹⁵³

All of these books and collections, however, with the one notable exception of ‘Urwah’s letters,¹⁵⁴ disappeared with the fall of the Umayyads – if they were ever finished. Since these writings were produced in a single or at most a few copies for the caliphal library and the exclusive use of the ruler and his family, they could not, with the one exception mentioned above, be transmitted further. The ‘Abbāsids had to start again from scratch.

1.4 Transmitters of Ibn Ishāq’s *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*: Yūnus ibn Bukayr, Ziyād al-Bakkā’ī, Salamah ibn al-Faḍl

Similar to the writings discussed above, Ibn Ishāq’s *al-Kitāb al-kabīr* (*Kitāb as-sīrah* or *Kitāb al-maḡāzī* in the wider sense) did not survive in the complete

version produced for the caliphal library. What we have are more or less extensive reworkings and parts of the text which have reached us via later transmission by his students. In addition, there are numerous separately transmitted traditions, which do not seem to come from the edited work.¹⁵⁵

Apart from the (lost) text commissioned by the court, Ibn Ishāq thus did not intend his work to be published in writing for literary lay circles, but meant it to be orally recited to his students. The fact, however, that the *Kitāb al-mağāzī* had been composed as a well-arranged and structured work becomes sufficiently clear from the later transmissions and recensions we have.

The most detailed information about Ibn Ishāq's transmission method comes from a report by his student Yūnus ibn Bukayr, which has been quoted above.¹⁵⁶ The Kūfan Ziyād ibn 'Abdallāh al-Bakkā'ī (d. 183/799),¹⁵⁷ another of his students, received the work twice in dictation.¹⁵⁸ According to another report,¹⁵⁹ al-Bakkā'ī is said to have sold his house and accompanied Ibn Ishāq on his journeys until he had heard the *Kitāb al-mağāzī* from him (in its entirety). The transmission line Ibn Ishāq > al-Bakkā'ī is particularly important, because the redactor Ibn Hišām received his entire Ibn Ishāq material from al-Bakkā'ī.¹⁶⁰

A third student, Salamah al-Faḍl (d. 191/806–7),¹⁶¹ claimed to have 'heard' (*sami'tu*) the *Mağāzī* twice from Ibn Ishāq,¹⁶² i.e. he received it through *samā'* (lectures) (*fa-kāna yaqūlu: ḥaddaṭa-nī bi-hī*). In addition, he is said to have copied for Ibn Ishāq the entire text of the work. It was then collated by Ibn Ishāq against his own autograph copy (*fa-nasaḥa li-bn Ishāq al-Mağāzī fa-'āraḍa-hū Ibn Ishāq*). Salamah was also reported to have inherited his teacher's written material;¹⁶³ therefore, he was credited with having produced the most complete 'books' on the *mağāzī*.¹⁶⁴ aṭ-Ṭabarī received most of his Ibn Ishāq material from him. Ibn Sa'd notes that besides the *Mağāzī*, Salamah also transmitted the *Kitāb al-mubtada'* on the authority of Ibn Ishāq.¹⁶⁵

1.5 Redactors and adaptors of Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-mağāzī*: Ibn Hišām, al-'Uṭṭaridī, aṭ-Ṭabarī

The 'books' of Ibn Ishāq's students are not preserved in their original form. The earliest material we have are works by his student's students. The Egyptian (originally Baṣrian) 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hišām (d. 218/834 or slightly earlier),¹⁶⁶ a student of Ibn Ishāq's student al-Bakkā'ī,¹⁶⁷ produced an abridged recension, not of the entire work, but mainly the *mab'at* and *mağāzī* parts.¹⁶⁸ Together with occasional additions from other sources, he introduced (carefully marked) commentaries of his own. His 'epitome', entitled *Sīrat Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*,¹⁶⁹ is extant in numerous manuscripts and serves today as our most important source for the life of Muḥammad.

At the beginning of his work,¹⁷⁰ Ibn Hišām explained the principles governing his choice of texts.¹⁷¹ He wanted to exclude, for example, stories in which Muḥammad did not play a role; certain verses and objectionable passages; material which could offend people; and traditions not confirmed by his teacher al-Bakkā'ī.

Aṭ-Ṭabarī also redacted a large amount of Ibn Ishāq-material – mostly, but not exclusively, on the authority of Ibn Ḥumayd Salamah. His traditions are taken not only from the *mabʿat* and *maḡāzī*, but also from the *mubtadaʿ* and *ḥulafāʿ* sections. The texts, however, were not collected in a book specifically dealing with the life of the Prophet, but were entered into his monumental *Taʿrīḥ* and *Tafsīr*.

The situation is different again in the case of the reworking produced by the Kūfan Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Ġabbār al-ʿUṭāridī (d. 272/886),¹⁷² studied by A. Guillaume¹⁷³ and, more recently, M. Muranyi.¹⁷⁴ Al-ʿUṭāridī’s material is derived from the *maḡāzī* version of Ibn Ishāq’s student Yūnus ibn Bukayr, who supplemented it with material collected from other authorities. Ibn Ḥaḡār writes: ‘He [scil. Yūnus ibn Bukayr] took Ibn Ishāq(’s text) and linked it with (other) traditions (*kāna ya ḥuḍu Ibn Ishāq fa-yūṣilu-hū bi-l-aḥādīṯ*)’.¹⁷⁵

Thus, the biographical literature speaks of Ibn Bukayr’s *Ziyādāt al-maḡāzī*.¹⁷⁶ This is a case in which a *rāwī*’s addition to a transmitted work of a substantial amount of material collected by him almost impels us to regard him as an ‘author’ in his own right. This frequent phenomenon has already been treated elsewhere; there, I have proposed the term ‘adaptor’ (in German, *Bearbeiter*) for this type of transmitter/author.¹⁷⁷

1.6 The subsequent transmission of Ibn Hišām’s *Sīrah*

To round off our survey, we will add a few remarks on the further transmission of a redacted version of the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, focusing on Ibn Hišām’s book.¹⁷⁸ We now leave the early phase of the Islamic transmission system (first/seventh–second/eighth centuries) and enter its mature and late phase (after the third/ninth century).¹⁷⁹

Ibn Hišām’s edited version of the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, his *Kitāb sīrah rasūl Allāh*, was also at first transmitted through the lecture system.¹⁸⁰ Yet, since Ibn Hišām produced a ‘fixed’ text, which became the basis of the further transmission, we can be relatively certain that it did not undergo any substantial modification.

Good manuscripts open with ‘introductory’ *isnāds* detailing the chain of transmitters (*riwāyah*), which links the last owner of the manuscript, *idealiter* without interruption, with its redactor (here: Ibn Hišām) and beyond him with the author (here: Ibn Ishāq). In this way, an entire book is regarded as something akin to a single tradition and supplied with an *isnād*. The technical terms (*alfāz*) of introductory *isnāds* (*aḥbara-nā*, *qara tu ʿalā*, etc.) mostly indicate oral – better: ‘heard’ or ‘audited’ – transmission. As a rule, the mode of transmission of conclusively edited works (‘fixed texts’) was *qirāʿah*, i.e. a *qāriʿ* (a ‘reader’, mostly a student) read out the work to its author or an authorized transmitter.¹⁸¹ In the process of reading out, the copy of the reader but also those of other students who attended the lecture session, could and should be ‘monitored’ (collated and corrected) by the author or transmitter of the work. In practice, however, some time often elapsed between ‘hearing’ a book in a lecture and producing one’s own written version (mostly by using as exemplar the copy of another member of the circle).¹⁸²

According to the introductory *isnāds* (*riwāyāt*) of all three of the manuscripts¹⁸³ used by Wüstenfeld for his *Sīrah* edition, the Mālikī traditionist Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd ar-Raḥīm ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Barqī (d. 286/899)¹⁸⁴ transmitted the entire work on the authority of its redactor Ibn Hišām;¹⁸⁵ according to the *isnāds* of two of these manuscripts, al-Barqī read it out to Ibn Hišām (*qirāʿah*). From al-Barqī, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh ibn Ğaʿfar ibn al-Ward (d. 351/962)¹⁸⁶ received the text and transmitted it to several students by ‘reading (it) out in his own voice’ (*qirāʿatan min lafzi-hī*).

In the introduction (*muqaddimah*)¹⁸⁷ to his classical commentary on Ibn Hišām’s *Sīrah*, *ar-Rawḍ al-unuf al-bāsim*, ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbdallāh as-Suhaylī (d. 581/1185)¹⁸⁸ provides an introductory *isnād* for his book. It also leads to Ibn al-Ward and al-Barqī; therefore, these two scholars must have played a central role in the systematic transmission and dissemination of the book.

This is the introductory *isnād* (*riwāyah*) of the Leipzig manuscript;¹⁸⁹ the chain of transmitters leads via the redactor (Ibn Hišām) all the way to the author himself:

al-ğuzʿ al-awwal min Sīrat sayyidi-nā rasūl Allāh (ṣ), ḥaddaṭa-nā ... Aḥmad ibn ʿAwn Allāh ... qāla ḥaddaṭa-nā bi-hī ... ʿAbdallāh ibn Ğaʿfar ibn al-Ward qirāʿatan min lafzi-hī, qāla ḥaddaṭa-nā ... ʿAbdarraḥīm ibn ʿAbdallāh ... ibn Abī Zurʿah az-Zuhrī al-Barqī, qāla ḥaddaṭa-nā ... ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hišām ... qāla ḥaddaṭa-nā Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallāh ... al-Bakkāʿī an Ibn Ishāq

The first part of the biography of our lord the Apostle of God. Aḥmad ibn Awn Allāh reported to us ... he said: ʿAbdallāh ibn Ğaʿfar ibn al-Ward reported it to us by reading (it) out in his own voice; he said: ʿAbdarraḥīm ibn ʿAbdallāh ... ibn Abī Zurʿah az-Zuhrī al-Barqī reported to us; he said: ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Hišām reported to us; he said: Ziyād ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Bakkāʿī reported to us, on the authority of Ibn Ishāq

At this late stage of the Islamic transmission system, it was usual practice for the transmitters’ own contributions to be confined to commentaries and glosses on the now ‘stable’ text; these contributions were for the most part clearly distinguished from the transmitted text. In the notes to his *Sīrah* edition (volume II), Wüstenfeld documented the marginal notes he found in his manuscripts. Variants found in different manuscripts of the text of Ibn Hišām’s *Sīrah* are throughout graphical in nature or of a kind regularly occurring in written transmission.

1.7 Written and oral transmission in the early Medinese teaching system

In the preceding discussion, I have tried to pinpoint the transmission methods of the members of a particularly important line of transmitters (ʿUrwah < az-Zuhrī < Ibn Ishāq < al-Bakkāʿī < Ibn Hišām), mostly on the basis of biographical literature, but, where possible, also on the basis of extant texts.¹⁹⁰ This diachronic

survey has produced important findings concerning the nature and development of the early Islamic transmission system in Medina. I focused specifically on the transmitters' views regarding the use of writing and the gradual emergence and expansion of literacy. My findings so far can be summed up as follows.

According to traditional accounts, scholars in Medina in the second half of the first century AH had strong reservations against writing down religious traditions. This led, for example, to the alleged erasing of 'Urwah's records, which he had produced as a mnemonic aid. In Medina, these reservations persisted (in theory) into the following generation of which az-Zuhrī was the most prominent representative, but they did not have any practical consequences: az-Zuhrī wrote or dictated numerous *kutub*. The following generation, that of Ibn Ishāq and Mālik ibn Anas, saw the emergence of the first *muṣannaḥ* works. Written recording was now generally regarded as permissible, even normal, in Medina. The situation was different in 'Irāq, especially in Baṣrah (but also in Kūfah): *muṣannifūn* such as Sa'īd ibn Abī 'Arūbah (d. 156/773, a contemporary of Ibn Ishāq)¹⁹¹ and Wakī' ibn al-Ḡarrāḥ (d. 197/812)¹⁹² still felt that they had to maintain the pretence that they managed without the help of written records.¹⁹³

The use of writing by scholars is not automatically equivalent to the production of proper books for wider literary circles (a reading public). We have to picture the development in early Islam as follows: written records were at first produced as mnemonic aids (in 'Urwah's generation); then, lecture notes appeared (with az-Zuhrī,¹⁹⁴ perhaps even with 'Urwah); and only with the *muṣannifūn* (Ma'mar ibn Rāšid, Mālik ibn Anas and other scholars of their generation) did writings become ordered works (in the case of these authors, works divided into chapters). With its coherent narrative structure and the overarching idea which frames its composition, Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-maḡāzī* is unique among the *muṣannaḥāt*.

The *muṣannaḥ* works of Mālik, Ibn Ishāq and their contemporaries still did not qualify as 'literature' proper – they lacked widespread dissemination to a reading lay public – but they were rather a 'literature of the school for the school'. In Ibn Ishāq's generation, the publication of these *muṣannaḥāt* took place in student circles through oral presentation (recitation or dictation).

At an early stage (until c. 800 CE, sometimes even later), Islamic scholars did not, of their own accord, produce editions of their collections intended for a wider lay audience, a reading public. Such conclusive redactions of books as were written were due to commissions – or pressure – from the court. The edited versions of the *maḡāzī* collections compiled by az-Zuhrī for Ḥālid al-Qasrī and by Ibn Ishāq for al-Manṣūr addressed a restricted group of readers at the court. Thus, they existed outside the normal transmission process and did not survive.

Does Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-maḡāzī* constitute 'historiography' and literature proper? For the finalized edition Ibn Ishāq is said to have submitted to the caliphal court, the answer has to be 'yes'. The material he passed on to his students and which we today only have in the different versions they transmitted, however, was exclusively 'literature of the school for the school'; it was largely linked to his personal lectures. It only became 'historiography' and literature

proper through its redaction by the students of his students and later scholars on the basis of lecture notes, dictated material, copies of written records etc.

I will now try to assess the role and extent of orality in early Islamic historical tradition with the help of the material discussed so far. The following remarks operate with the terminology developed in ethnological and historical research on the oral transmission of reports about events (oral tradition research). The key terms are ‘oral history’ and ‘oral tradition’.

In his study *Oral Tradition as History*, an easily accessible overview of oral tradition research, J. Vansina defines ‘oral history’ as follows: ‘The sources of oral historians are reminiscences, hearsay, or eyewitness accounts about events and situations which are contemporary, that is, which occurred during the lifetime of the informants.’ Oral traditions, on the other hand, ‘are no longer contemporary. They have passed from mouth to mouth, for a period beyond the lifetime of the informant.’ Thus, they are ‘memories of memories’.¹⁹⁵

‘Urwah – like other scholars of his generation – received some of his material from contemporaries of the reported events, but some also from informants who could only offer ‘memories of memories’. Reports he attributed to ‘Ā’iṣah consist of both her own experiences¹⁹⁶ and the stories of others she passed on. Therefore, his sources were partly testimonies of ‘oral history’, partly ‘oral traditions’.

The oral character of his sources would not be in question even if some of his authorities owned a booklet (*ṣaḥīfah*) to record the words of the Prophet or others. The majority and most important of his informants did not own such written records. ‘Ā’iṣah especially, who, according to the *isnāds*, contributed two-thirds of ‘Urwah’s material,¹⁹⁷ answered her nephew’s questions orally and told him her stories.

However, the form of the ‘Urwah material available to us is not the form it had when he recited it. What we have today reached us via az-Zuhrī and other scholars of that generation; even their versions are extant only in further transmission.¹⁹⁸ Since ‘oral history’ becomes ‘oral tradition’ after a generation, ‘Urwah’s reports received by az-Zuhrī and his contemporaries would have to be treated as ‘oral tradition’. At this point, however, we have to ask whether the bulk of az-Zuhrī’s sources can be regarded as oral. This might be correct for one part of his material, which he drew from non-scholarly informants or acquired in answer to his questions. But for the rest, the label ‘oral’ is problematic.

First, of course, because some scholars of the previous generation such as ‘Urwah, but also az-Zuhrī himself, had written records which they used for transmitting traditions (orally). Secondly, az-Zuhrī’s (and ‘Urwah’s) material differs from what we normally understand to be ‘oral tradition’ (specifically structured narrations in a society without a writing system)¹⁹⁹ because of the systematic impulse behind its collection.

Our understanding of science is of course different from theirs; still, scholars of this era also strove to find out what actually happened, not what people thought had happened. Their endeavour to establish a chronology, noticeable in az-Zuhrī (but at best only rudimentary in ‘Urwah’s material), also arose from this systematic impulse: it is not characteristic of oral tradition.²⁰⁰ ‘Lecture system’ would be

an appropriate term for this mode of transmission created by early Islam (by the generations from 'Urwah to Ibn Ishāq), which was 'no longer' purely oral, but 'not yet' purely written.

The lecture system neither supplanted oral transmission in one fell swoop nor are the two categories clearly distinguishable from one another in each case. As a kind of 'disciplined'²⁰¹ oral tradition, it *increasingly* crystallized in a number of places out of a purely oral tradition and grew to monopolize transmission over time. In the generation of Ibn Ishāq and the other *muṣannifūn*, this process had not yet been completed.

Ibn Ishāq continued to collect oral traditions (from members of his family and his tribe); he asked questions and recorded the answers. But he drew the largest part of his material, especially reports on the principal events of early Islam, from the lecture system,²⁰² e.g. many traditions from the lectures of az-Zuhrī, who in turn had received them from 'Urwah.

The oral dimension was never entirely displaced in the Islamic transmission system, even after genuine historiographical and other works such as Ibn Hišām's *Sīrah*, a recension of Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-maǧāzī*, became available. It was preserved, at least as an ideal, down to the latest phase of the transmission system: all works, even the conclusively edited ones, were supposed to be disseminated not only through copying, but by *samā'* and *qirā'ah*, hearing and reading out – although this did not happen very often in practice.

1.8 Summary

So far, our study has led to the following conclusions:

- From its very beginnings down to its latest stage, systematic teaching in Islam mainly consisted of the lecture system: the teacher – or his proxy – recited, students 'heard'.
- Orality of transmission in the lecture system was in the beginning a reality and intentional; only the Qur'ān was to be 'scripture'.
- In its mature and late stage, orality was retained in the Islamic teaching system in some aspects or at least stipulated ('heard' or 'audited' transmission) for finalized books.
- Literacy infiltrated the system at a very early stage (written aides-mémoires) and grew steadily in importance (lecture notes; then, 'literature of the school for the school').
- The composition of proper books (and the compilation of large collections) received a decisive boost from the 'court impulse'.
- Finally, literacy became the more important vehicle of transmission, even though this fact was never fully acknowledged.

2 The text in the transmission process

Muḥammad's first revelation (the *iqra*' narration)

In the first chapter, I collected information about the nature of the early Islamic tradition mainly from biographical literature. Now, I will test and supplement our findings on the basis of two case studies. I will document the fortunes of traditions chosen from two tradition complexes on their way from their (assumed) first narrator to their redaction in a work extant today.

In keeping with our interests in the first chapter, I will focus on tradition complexes which come with a chain of transmitters beginning with 'Ā'īshah and leading via 'Urwah and az-Zuhrī to Ibn Ishāq. The first of our case studies, intended for the most part to give us insight into the philological issues of early Islamic historical tradition (stability or variability of the text in the course of transmission; literal vs. free transmission of the text), concentrates on one – or several – tradition(s) reporting Muḥammad's first revelation experience. Central to them is the so-called *iqra*' narration.¹ The reports relate the following incident: 'An angel' (later identified as Nāmūs or Gabriel) appears to Muḥammad and summons him (according to the main transmission: forces him) to recite, showing him the first five verses of *sūrah* 96 which begins with *iqra*' *bi-smi rabbi-ka*. In the course of the narration, we also encounter the Prophet's wife Ḥadīḡah, who comforts her husband, disconcerted and troubled as he is by his vision, and her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who predicts his future and final triumph.

Our study is based on an extensive corpus (as exhaustive as possible) of traditions narrating the incident as outlined above (or in a similar manner). In accordance with our previous remarks, we will focus our attention on traditions reported on the authority of 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (from 'Ā'īshah) as the original informant. Additionally, we have to consider a number of traditions with different *isnāds* which are similar enough to the 'Urwah tradition to presume a close relationship or even an identical origin.

The traditions in question have been studied² by Sellheim,³ Juynboll,⁴ Motzki⁵ and Rubin.⁶ I have adopted the method of *ḥadīṭ* analysis developed by Juynboll, who improved upon and refined Schacht's approach. As an extension to Juynboll's method, I supplement his formal analysis with an examination of the contents of the traditions, including careful textual comparisons.

Sellheim also undertook such a study of the contents of the traditions. He did not, however, operate on the basis of a corpus, but only with a few selected

versions of two traditions; drawing sweeping conclusions from the differences between these unsystematically examined versions, he arrived at several problematic results.⁷

Rubin and Motzki mainly focused on the interpretation of *Sūrat al-‘alaq*. Thus, their publications deal with questions which are not central to our concerns. Still, some of their findings are of relevance and will be indicated in the notes.

In the past, the *iqra*'-narration has been studied by Nöldeke and Schwally,⁸ Buhl,⁹ Andrae,¹⁰ Bell,¹¹ Widengren,¹² Paret,¹³ Lohmann,¹⁴ Rudolph,¹⁵ von Stülpnagel¹⁶ and Watt.¹⁷ In addition, almost every book which deals with Muḥammad in some detail comments on his first revelation. Due to their importance for the study of the history of transmission, we must pay special attention to the discussion in Sprenger's biography of the Prophet.¹⁸ In what follows, we will go back to Sprenger's findings on one very important point.

A great number of compilers have preserved versions of the relevant tradition(s), among them Ibn Hišām,¹⁹ aṭ-Ṭabarī,²⁰ ‘Abd ar-Razzāq,²¹ Ibn Sa’d,²² al-Buḥārī,²³ Muslim ibn al-Ḥaǧǧāǧ²⁴ and at-Tirmidī.²⁵ The largest group has an *isnād* such as n.n.²⁶ < az-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’iṣah. The relevant *ḥadīths* all begin with ‘The first (signs) of revelation appearing to the messenger of God were true dream visions in his sleep. Each dream vision he experienced came unto him like the crack of dawn’ (the wording may display minor modifications).

2.1 The Zuhrī recension

2.1a Content, nature and lines of transmission

Before I proceed, I will outline the contents of the most complete version of the recension, transmitted by ‘Abd ar-Razzāq²⁷ (< Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’iṣah):²⁸

- 1 Muḥammad's true dream visions appearing ‘like the crack of dawn’ as the first marks of his prophethood; his religious practices (*taḥannuṭ*)²⁹ in solitude atop mount Ḥirā’ (*taḥannuṭ* narration).³⁰
- 2 Unexpected appearance of the angel (who calls Muḥammad ‘messenger of God’*) in a cave on mount Ḥirā’.
- 3 (Direct speech of Muḥammad:) The angel's request to recite (*iqra*’) and Muḥammad's refusal: ‘I am not one to recite’ (*mā anā bi-qāri*’). The angel presses Muḥammad. The scene is repeated twice. After pressing Muḥammad for a third time, revelation of *sūrah* 96: 1–5 (*iqra*’ narration).
- 4 Muḥammad's dread and return to Ḥadīǧah. His exclamation: ‘Wrap me up’ (*zammilū-nī*). His dread subsides (Ḥadīǧah narration I).
- 5 Muḥammad's conversation with Ḥadīǧah (‘I fear for my soul’). Ḥadīǧah comforts him. Her praise (expressed in parallel phrases³¹ of Muḥammad) (Ḥadīǧah narration II).
- 6 Muḥammad's and Ḥadīǧah's visit to Waraqah ibn Nawfal. (Information about Waraqah.**)

40 *The text in the transmission process*

7 Discussion with Waraqah. Waraqah's identification of the angel as the Nāmūs and his prophecy: the expulsion and eventual triumph of Muḥammad.

a (List of revelations directly following on *sūrah* 96: *sūrah* 68, *sūrah* 74, then 93.*)

8 Report about Waraqah's subsequent death (Waraqah narration).

9 (Temporary) suspension of the revelation (*fatrah* narration).

10 (The angel appears anew.*) Muḥammad's intention to commit suicide. During his attempt to throw himself off the mountain, Gabriel appears (on the horizon**) and addresses Muḥammad as 'messenger of God' (*ufuq* narration).

11 Calming and prevention of Muḥammad's suicide by the angelic vision.³²

12 ([New tradition³³ with the *isnād* Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī < Abū Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. 94/712–13 or 10 years later)³⁴ < Ḡābir ibn 'Abdallāh (d. 73/692–3 or later)³⁵ < Muḥammad:] The Prophet's own report about the *fatrah* (temporary suspension of the revelation). At its end vision of the angel of Ḥirā', sitting on a throne on the horizon [*ufuq* narration].³⁶ Dread and return of Muḥammad; his exclamation *zammilū-nī ... fa-dattirū-nī*, 'Wrap me up, wrap me up!' Revelation of *sūrah* 74.)

The nature of this report concerning Muḥammad's first revelation experience is wholly determined by the 'eerie vision in the cave'.³⁷

In Figure 2.1 the transmission lines of the *ḥadīth* according to their *isnāds* are outlined. If we compare the *isnāds* given by the compilers, we notice that all of them converge on az-Zuhrī. For example, Ibn Ishāq received the tradition from his teacher az-Zuhrī, as did Ma'mar ibn Rāšid, the teacher of 'Abd ar-Razzāq. Before az-Zuhrī, the transmission follows a single strand, originating with 'Ā'īshah and passed on by 'Urwah to az-Zuhrī. Thus, the diagram consists of two distinct parts with az-Zuhrī as their link. With Schacht/Juynboll, we can label az-Zuhrī the 'common link', CL, of the chain.

Since so many independent compilers trace the *ḥadīth* back to az-Zuhrī (and only to him), we can, for the time being, assume that it was he who disseminated it. The following analysis of the respective texts will confirm our assumption.

2.1b Motifs

For our study, Andrae's findings are fundamental: the complete version of the report is a conglomerate consisting of four main elements or motifs (Andrae calls them 'legends'): the *taḥannuṭ* narration (Muḥammad's solitary devotional practices on mount Ḥirā'); the *iqra'* narration (in the strict sense) (the appearance of an angel who forces Muḥammad to recite *sūrah* 96: 1–5); the Waraqah narration and the *ufuq* narration (the appearance of an angel on the horizon addressing Muḥammad as prophet).³⁸ In addition, Lohmann proposes a distinction between the following three elements:³⁹ dream visions; the Ḥadīḡah narration

(I. the *zammilū-nī* motif; II. Ḥadīḡah's comfort and praise of Muḥammad) and the *fatrah* (temporary suspension of the revelation) narration.⁴⁰ It should be pointed out that the *fatrah* narration, if it occurs at all in traditions according to az-Zuhrī, invariably contains the *ufuq* motif and that the angelic vision concluding the *fatrah* is, in the Zuhrī transmission, always occasioned by Muḥammad's intention to commit suicide.

For az-Zuhrī, the *iqra'* narration is at the centre of the first revelation experience. The *ufuq* narration, which in other transmissions serves as the framework for the first revelation, plays only a minor role.

Proof for the conglomerate nature of the tradition is the fact that practically all of its components occur in isolation or connected with other motifs in other transmissions. Below,⁴¹ we will have to inquire whether the elements were combined by az-Zuhrī (as Andrae maintains)⁴² or by an earlier authority.

Distinct from this question is another one, to which we will turn first: how did az-Zuhrī's transmitters treat his text? Did they always transmit his complete version or only parts of it?

2.1c *The text stock*

Some transmitters passed on az-Zuhrī's traditions as a whole, some in shortened or fragmentary form. In addition to the arrangement of the text and some characteristic variants, it is the text stock of the respective versions in particular which differentiates them. For example, all transmitters depending on Ibn Ishāq (Ibn Hišām, al-'Uṭāridī and at-Tirmidī)⁴³ present only the first part, roughly four sentences, until *min an yaḥluwa waḥda-hū* (section 1 of our outline). Thus, we can infer that their model, Ibn Ishāq's version of the Zuhrī tradition, already took this abbreviated form. We call this the short version I (SV I).

Al-Balāḍurī,⁴⁴ transmitting directly from Ibn Sa'd,⁴⁵ has another, slightly longer, short version (SV II), which corresponds to sections 1 and 2 of our outline.⁴⁶ It is derived from Ma'mar ibn Rāšid (and another of az-Zuhrī's students) via Ibn Sa'd's teacher, al-Wāqidī. In his *Aḥbār Makkah*,⁴⁷ al-Azraqī included a version of medium length (MV I) covering sections 1–3. Via two transmitters, it also leads us back to Ma'mar.

In addition to SV II mentioned above, al-Balāḍurī⁴⁸ also knows the last part of the tradition according to Ma'mar, the so-called *fatrah* annex (which he does not transmit on the authority of Ibn Sa'd). This part of the Ma'mar version occurs separately in aṭ-Ṭabarī as well.⁴⁹

We do not know who was responsible for the various abbreviations: was it Ma'mar himself, who, in different lectures, recited versions of varying length or sometimes only parts of the tradition? Or later transmitters, e.g. al-Wāqidī (in the case of his SV II)? The latter is more likely, since the shortenings seem to have been introduced in the process and for reasons of redaction.⁵⁰ Ma'mar, however, who transmitted directly from the CL, az-Zuhrī, knew his complete version and passed it on: his student 'Abd ar-Razzāq⁵¹ and transmitters depending on him (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Ḥibbān)⁵² received a complete text.

It was not only Ma‘mar, but also two of az-Zuhrī’s other students who transmitted long versions of the story, ‘Uqayl ibn Ḥālīd (d. 141/758–9 or slightly later)⁵³ and Yūnus ibn Yazīd al-Aylī (d. 159/775–6).⁵⁴ Yet, the Muslim (and Bayhaqī) transmissions⁵⁵ of Yūnus’ version lack sections 8–11 and al-Buḥārī’s transmission⁵⁶ of the ‘Uqayl version is missing sections 10–11 of our outline. In both cases, the last part is left out. It reports Muḥammad’s intention, during the *fatrah*, to commit suicide and his hindrance by a second angelic vision (*fatrah* annex). While this passage apparently never formed part of the ‘Uqayl version, we find a full Yūnus version including the *fatrah* annex in Abū ‘Awānah’s *Musnad*.⁵⁷

‘Uqayl’s long version (which, however, does not have the *fatrah* annex, cf. above immediately) occupies a prominent place in al-Buḥārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*: as the third tradition in its first chapter entitled *Kayfa kāna bad’ al-waḥy* it is placed at the very beginning of the entire work.⁵⁸ But more frequently, the version according to ‘Uqayl was transmitted in an abbreviated form without sections 1–3 of our outline. This fragmentary version and no other, which al-Bayhaqī quotes verbatim in his *Dalā’il an-nubūwah*,⁵⁹ has reached Muslim ibn al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ.⁶⁰ After presenting Yūnus’ full and unmixed version (without *fatrah* annex) in the chapter *Bad’ al-waḥy* of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*,⁶¹ Muslim explicitly points out the fragmentary character of the ‘Uqayl version, then quotes the missing piece and indicates its characteristic variants. On the other hand, al-Buḥārī, in addition to ‘Uqayl’s full version, also knows the latter’s version with the fragmentary beginning.⁶² It seems as if both versions were passed on side by side for a time⁶³ (until Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Bukayr, d. 231/845).⁶⁴

In al-Buḥārī, we find complete texts of the tradition twice more, but both times in combined versions: in the *Kitāb at-tafsīr*⁶⁵ on the authority of ‘Uqayl and Yūnus (without *fatrah* annex) and in the *Kitāb at-ta’bīr*⁶⁶ on the authority of ‘Uqayl and ‘Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma‘mar (with *fatrah* annex). In the following discussion, we will label as LV I the long versions according to Ma‘mar, ‘Uqayl and Yūnus, which exhibit (apart from the *fatrah* annex) few textual differences. Because of their resemblance, al-Buḥārī could easily have combined these versions.

Yet another long version, reported by aṭ-Ṭabarī⁶⁷ on the authority of az-Zuhrī’s student an-Nu‘mān ibn Rāšīd⁶⁸ via three transmitters, varies substantially from LV I in both text stock and arrangement. Therefore, we have to treat it separately from LV I⁶⁹ and will label it LV II.

In addition, there is a fragmentary version (FV) transmitted by Abū Dāwūd aṭ-Ṭayālīsī⁷⁰ on the authority of another of az-Zuhrī’s students, Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī l-Aḥḍar.⁷¹ It consists of two fragments, which aṭ-Ṭayālīsī lists as two separate *ḥadīṡ*s, nos. 1469 and 1467. They contain the beginning of the text (sections 1 and 2) and the events after Muḥammad’s return to Ḥadīḡah except for the *fatrah* annex (sections 4–7 of our outline).

Finally, we have to return again to the last part of our tradition, the *fatrah* annex (sections 9–11). Ma‘mar’s version of it has been transmitted separately at least twice: aṭ-Ṭabarī, who does not know Ma‘mar’s full version, transmits the *fatrah* annex with the *isnād* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-A‘lā (d. 245/859–60)⁷² <

Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr (d. 190/805–6)⁷³ < Ma‘mar. Al-Balāḍurī⁷⁴ transmits the annex with the *isnād* Šurayḥ ibn Yūnus < Sufyān (which one?) < Ma‘mar.⁷⁵ Immediately after this annex, ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, aṭ-Ṭabarī, al-Balāḍurī and also Abū ‘Awānah quote a further tradition on the *fatrah* incident and the revelation following it, *sūrah* 74. The first three compilers transmit this report on the authority of Ma‘mar, while Abū ‘Awānah adduces it according to Yūnus. In ‘Abd ar-Razzāq and Abū ‘Awānah, it is preceded by the new *isnād* az-Zuhrī < Abū Salamah ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān < Ğābir ibn ‘Abdallāh < Prophet. Aṭ-Ṭabarī and al-Balāḍurī add it without a separate *isnād*.⁷⁶

2.1d *The arrangement of the text*

The two long versions (LV I and II) differ in the sequence of events: in LV II, the passage reporting Muḥammad’s return to Ḥadīḡah and his plea to be wrapped up (section 4 in our outline) *precedes* the revelation experience (section 3). Between these two sections, we find in LV II the section describing the second coming of the angel and Muḥammad’s intention to commit suicide (section 10). In LV I, this report is part of the *fatrah* annex.

The report about Waraqah’s death (section 8) and the temporary suspension of revelation (section 9) are missing in LV II. The version has a different ending: it mentions the revelations following that of *sūrah* 96: 1–5 (section 7a).

According to Andrae’s and Lohmann’s analysis, the order of main motifs in LV I is therefore as follows:

Dream visions—*taḥannut*—appearance of the angel—*iqra’*—Ḥadīḡah I and II—Waraqah—*fatrah* (suicidal intentions and *ufuq*),

whereas in LV II, it is:

Dream visions—*taḥannut*—appearance of the angel—Ḥadīḡah I—suicidal intentions—*ufuq* (barely elaborated)—*iqra’*—Ḥadīḡah II—Waraqah.

The differences in textual arrangement lead to substantial differences in the meaning of the respective versions. We cannot ascertain with any certainty whether both arrangements originated with az-Zuhrī – it is conceivable that he recited different versions of the story on different occasions – or whether the responsibility lies with a transmitter between az-Zuhrī and aṭ-Ṭabarī or, finally, with aṭ-Ṭabarī himself. I will return to this question below.⁷⁷

2.1e *Do the texts correspond verbatim or only thematically?*

This issue requires us to dig somewhat deeper. It makes sense to begin the analysis with some more recent texts, comparing versions resulting from a later branching (i.e. one occurring ‘above’ the main branch in Figure 2.1, the CL az-Zuhrī),⁷⁸ and then to go back in history, comparing texts which originated from an earlier

branching point, until we arrive at the versions which share the main branching point only, the CL az-Zuhrī.

2.1e(α) The 'Abd ar-Razzāq branch; further branches on the same level

Of all PCLs of the second generation after the CL, the 'Abd ar-Razzāq branch is most suitable for analysis: his own version is extant in its 'original' form⁷⁹ and we have a number of sub-versions depending on it (Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal,⁸⁰ Ibn Ḥibbān,⁸¹ al-Bayhaqī,⁸² Abū Nu'aym⁸³ and al-Wāḥidī⁸⁴).⁸⁵ Comparing these texts with each other, we observe few variants and a high degree of literal concordance. Al-Wāḥidī has a truncated end without the Warāqah narration and subsequent material. It can easily be explained on redactional grounds: these sections were uninteresting for al-Wāḥidī, whose main concern was the 'occasions of revelation' (*asbāb an-nuzūl*). In addition, we find few rearrangements (in some sub-versions, the parallel phrases of Ḥadīḡah's praise of Muḥammad are reversed) and deletions of single words or word groups (the three attempts of the angel to make Muḥammad recite are not always elaborated in detail; the abovementioned parallel phrases are not always complete).

Three extant versions emanate from another PCL of the second generation after az-Zuhrī, Yūnus ibn Bukayr (d. 199/815),⁸⁶ two of them are to be found in al-'Uṭaridī's work⁸⁷ and one in at-Tirmidī's.⁸⁸ This instance is less significant than the previous, because it is a short version (SV I) and the text sample is therefore comparably small. Still, it confirms the previous findings: here, too, we find only some minor variants, e.g. an active verbal form in one sub-version of al-'Uṭaridī (*wa-ḥabbaba llāh 'azza wa-ḡalla ilay-hī l-ḥalwah*) instead of a passive form without expression of the subject (*wa-ḥubbiba ilay-hī l-ḥalwah*) in the other 'Uṭaridī sub-version and in at-Tirmidī. Interestingly enough, the genre of works from which the versions in question have been taken (a *maḡāzī* work and a collection of traditions) did not exert any influence on the wording or the length of the tradition. Thus, there is no 'historical version' as opposed to a '*ḥadīṭ* version'.

There is not much to say about another PCL of this generation, 'Abdallāh ibn Wahb (d. 197/812),⁸⁹ who transmits on the authority of Yūnus ibn Yazīd < az-Zuhrī: the two long, unmixed sub-versions reported on his authority in Muslim's and Abū 'Awānah's work show little variation. The PCL al-Layṭ ibn Sa'd (< 'Uqayl < az-Zuhrī) and sub-versions depending on him will be dealt with below.⁹⁰

To sum up, our samples show that after c. 800, parallel texts display only a minimal degree of variation.

2.1e(β) The Ma'mar branch

Let us now go back one generation. By far the most important PCL of this time is Ma'mar ibn Rāšid, followed (at a distance) by Ibn Ishāq and Yūnus ibn Yazīd. A fragment (the *fatrah* annex),⁹¹ a short version (SV II),⁹² a medium version (MV)⁹³ and a long version (LV I) originate from Ma'mar. The latter is entirely dependent on 'Abd ar-Razzāq.⁹⁴ Thus, Ma'mar's version has been subjected to

more substantial revisions than the sub-version of 'Abd ar-Razzāq a generation later. They were probably undertaken by students for redactional reasons.⁹⁵

In the Ma'mar branch, the transmissions of Ibn Sa'd, al-Azraqī and 'Abd ar-Razzāq (as a representative for the entire 'Abd ar-Razzāq branch) are good candidates for comparison. In the short passage he transmits,⁹⁶ Ibn Sa'd has two additional sentences compared to the remaining transmissions: *fa-makata ... walam yakun šay' aḥabba ...* A comparison with the Ibn Ishāq branch⁹⁷ reveals that the sentences are part of the original text stock of the tradition. Since Ibn Sa'd < al-Wāqidī transmits the Zuhri version not only via Ma'mar, but also via another transmitter, there are two possible explanations for the extra material:

- 1 Ma'mar still retained the extra material. 'Abd ar-Razzāq discarded it.
- 2 Ma'mar had already discarded the material. Ibn Sa'd < al-Wāqidī received it via the other transmitter from the original Zuhri version.

The second explanation is more likely, because the extra material is missing in al-Azraqī's version, which also depends on Ma'mar. On the other hand, aṭ-Ṭayālīsī, who does not depend on Ma'mar, preserved a chunk of the first additional sentence (*fa-kāna yamkuṭu l-ayyām*), even though he substantially shortens and divides the tradition into two pieces.

Al-Azraqī's version (MV) generally shows few differences to the versions of the 'Abd ar-Razzāq branch. These differences (apart from the abridged end) would not be more far-reaching than those between the respective versions of the 'Abd ar-Razzāq branch if al-Azraqī did not have a surprise in store at the end of the text: after the angel's third request to recite, Muḥammad says *mā aqra'u* instead of *mā anā bi-qāri'*. In this regard, al-Azraqī's version matches the Zuhri version preserved by aṭ-Ṭabarī (LV II) and another version of the first revelation experience (LV III), which will be treated below: they all transmit the answer in the form *mā aqra'u*.⁹⁸

The edited texts of al-Balāḍurī's and Ibn Sa'd's versions are available to us. In spite of the fact that the former was a student of the latter and that both authors conclusively redacted their works, we find that the texts are not as similar as we would expect. On the one hand, al-Balāḍurī's version, which matches Ibn Sa'd's wording at the beginning and the end, has been shortened in several places. This is not surprising; redactional considerations frequently mandated shortenings. More surprising is the fact that, in al-Balāḍurī's version, one of the passages he deleted (or omitted) from Ibn Sa'd's (his teacher's) version is the additional material Ibn Sa'd transmitted as compared to the 'Abd ar-Razzāq branch (except for *wa-yamkuṭu*).

On the other hand, al-Balāḍurī has different extra material⁹⁹ compared to Ibn Sa'd: the parenthetical insertion *wa-t-taḥannuṭ ...* which belongs to the original text stock of Ma'mar. Thus, our observation confirms Goitein's finding¹⁰⁰ that al-Balāḍurī does not quote a version identical with the edited version from Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*, but apparently transmits a partially different version he had written down from his teacher (*ḥaddaṭa-nā*) in a lecture session.

To compare the *fatrah* annex in its different guises in the Ma‘mar transmission, we will have a closer look at two of the three known versions: those of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq and Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr.¹⁰¹

This is the text according to ‘Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī (from ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ*):¹⁰²

wa-fatara l-waḥy fatratan ḥattā ḥazina rasūl Allāh (ṣ)–fī-mā balaḡa-nā–ḥazanan
ḡadā min-hu mirāran kay yataraddā min ru’ūs šawāhiq al-ḡibāl.
fa-lammā awfā bi-ḡurwat ḡabal tabaddā la-hū Ḡibrīl (‘as)
fa-qāla: yā Muḥammad, yā rasūl Allāh ḥaqqaṇ,
fa-yaskunu li-ḡālika ḡa’šu-hū wa-taqirru nafsu-hū, fa-raḡa’a.
fa-idā ṭālat ‘alay-hi fatrat al-waḥy ‘āda li-miṭl ḡālika,
fa-idā awfā bi-ḡurwat ḡabal tabaddā la-hū Ḡibrīl (‘as) fa-qāla la-hū miṭl
ḡālika.
qāla Ma‘mar; qāla az-Zuhrī, fa-aḥbara-nī Abū Salamah ibn ‘Abdarraḥmān
‘an Ḡābir ibn ‘Abdallāh,
qāla: sami’tu rasūl Allāh wa-huwa yuḥaddiṭu ‘an fatrat al-waḥy,
fa-qāla fī ḥadīṭi-hi: bayna anā amšī sami’tu šawtan min as-samā’...

The revelation was temporarily suspended, so that the messenger of God – according to what we have heard – became very sad.

Therefore it occurred to him on a number of occasions that he should throw himself off the peaks of high mountains.

When he reached the summit of the mountain, Gabriel appeared to him.

He said: ‘O Muḥammad, O true messenger of God!’

Therefore, his agitation subsided and his soul calmed down and he returned (home).

When the suspension of the revelation persisted, he did the same again:

When he reached the summit of the mountain, Gabriel appeared to him and said the same to him.

Ma‘mar said: az-Zuhrī said: Abū Salamah ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān told me on the authority of Ḡābir ibn ‘Abdallāh that he said: ‘I heard the messenger of God speak about the suspension of the revelation.

He said in his narration : “While I was walking along, I heard a voice from heaven...”

The *fatrah* annex according to Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr < Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī (from aṭ-Ṭabarī’s *Tafsīr*):¹⁰³

fatara l-waḥy ‘an rasūl Allāh (ṣ) fatratan fa-ḥazina ḥazanan
fa-ḡa’ala ya’dū ilā šawāhiq ru’ūs al-ḡibāl li-yataraddā min-hā.
fa-kulla-mā awfā bi-ḡurwat ḡabal ibtadā la-hū Ḡabrā’īl (‘as)
fa-yaqūlu: inna-ka nabī Allāh
fa-yaskunu ḡa’šu-hū wa-taskunu nafsu-hū.

*fa-kāna an-nabī (š) yuḥaddītu 'an dālika, qāla:
bayna-mā anā amšī yawman, ra'aytu al-malak...*

The revelation to the messenger of God was temporarily suspended and he became very sad.

He started to run to the high summits of the mountains to throw himself off. Whenever he reached the summit of a mountain, Gabriel appeared to him.

He said: 'You are the Prophet of God.'

Then, his agitation subsided and his soul calmed down.

The Prophet used to talk about this and said:

'While I was walking along one day, I saw the angel ...'

Apart from their similar meaning and some literal matches, the texts differ substantially in their wording, more so than the several Ma'mar versions of the *beginning* of the tradition (e.g. the versions of al-Azraqī and 'Abd ar-Razzāq). The third Ma'mar version of the *fatrah* annex, that of al-Balāḍurī, contains additional variants, but it is closer to that of aṭ-Ṭabarī than to that of 'Abd ar-Razzāq (i.e. it lacks the new *isnād* introducing the Prophet's direct speech).

Our analysis of the transmission of the tradition from the PCL Ma'mar leads to the following results: parts of the text were passed on fairly literally (*riwāyah bil-lafẓ*), e.g. the beginning, other parts rather freely (*riwāyah bi-l-mā'nā*), e.g. the *fatrah* annex. All in all, the Ma'mar branch displays a much higher degree of variation than the 'Abd ar-Razzāq branch one generation later.

2.1e(γ) *The Ibn Ishāq branch*

The next PCL on our list is Ibn Ishāq. As pointed out above, all transmitters depending on Ibn Ishāq present only the first part (roughly four sentences) of the tradition. In the case of this PCL, we have to compare the Yūnus ibn Bukayr version (represented by the almost identical texts of at-Tirmidī¹⁰⁴ and al-Uṭaridī¹⁰⁵ with the Bakkā'ī version (in Ibn Hišām's redaction).¹⁰⁶ Apart from literal correspondences, e.g. in the first and last sentences, we also find variants. Al-Bakkā'ī > Ibn Hišām preserves the important phrase *ar-ru'ā/ar-ru'yah aṣ-ṣādiqah*, which belongs to the oldest elements of the tradition; it is absent from the Yūnus ibn Bukayr transmission. On the other hand, it seems as if Ibn Hišām omits the sentence *fa-makaṭa ... an yamkuṭa*, which belongs to the original Zuhri version. But a very similar sentence (*fa-makaṭa rasūl Allāh (š) yarā wa-yasma'u mā šā'a llāh an yamkuṭa*) occurs in the following tradition,¹⁰⁷ where it does not belong. It is perhaps a transmission error on Ibn Hišām's part: the sentence might have 'shifted' a little in his written notes.

Redactional reasons may have prompted Ibn Ishāq to terminate the full narration after only a few sentences. Two traditions further on, he includes a very similar (perhaps originally identical) story (LV III)¹⁰⁸ about the first revelation experience; Ibn Ishāq could have abridged the previous version to avoid repetition. The indefatigable aṭ-Ṭabarī quotes both traditions in their entirety.¹⁰⁹

2.1e(δ) The Zuhrī branch

We now come to the CL proper, az-Zuhrī. For the versions of his tradition we have studied so far (LV I according to the Zuhrī transmitters Ma'mar, Yūnus, 'Uqayl and SV I according to Ibn Ishāq), we can postulate a similar, if not identical archetype. This cannot be said for aṭ-Ṭabarī's version (LV II, on the authority of the Zuhrī transmitter an-Nu'mān ibn Rāšid).¹¹⁰ We have already identified the main difference between LV I (e.g. in 'Abd ar-Razzāq, Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Buḥārī, Muslim ibn al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ) and LV II (in aṭ-Ṭabarī).¹¹¹ the varying arrangement of two passages and the resulting modification of the meaning of the text. In addition, LV II abridges (the three requests of the angel are mentioned but not elaborated) and deletes material (background information about Waraqah is missing). Moreover, we find numerous variants. The most interesting example is the wording of the Prophet's answer to the requests of the angel: throughout, it is *mā aqra'u* instead of *mā anā bi-qāri'*. Equally conspicuous is the (almost) literal match at the end of the text (in Waraqah's last announcement).

How these two divergent versions might have come about can only be determined after we have analysed a third, analogous, tradition (LV III) concerning the first revelation experience, one which does not depend on az-Zuhrī.

2.1e(ε) The variants and their discussion in Muslim ḥadīth criticism

To conclude our analysis of the Zuhrī recension for now, I will discuss some variants which the compilers had already pointed out and noted. After quoting the full text of the tradition (without the *fatrah* annex) according to Yūnus ibn Yazīd,¹¹² Muslim ibn Ḥaḡḡāḡ conscientiously lists variants¹¹³ he found in the versions of 'Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma'mar and Layṭ < 'Uqayl. Muslim explicitly states that the latter comes without the beginning (section 1–3 of our outline). In addition, it is said to contain the following variants: *yarḡufu fu'ādu-hū* instead of Yūnus' *tarḡufu bawādiru-hū* and *ay ibn 'ammi* instead of Yūnus's *ay 'ammi*. He lists the following variants for Ma'mar > 'Abd ar-Razzāq: *lā yuḥzinu-ka llāh* instead of Yūnus's *lā yuḥzī-ka llāh* and, again, *ay ibn 'ammi* instead of Yūnus's *ay 'ammi*. Muslim's statements are generally in line with our findings in the relevant texts.

The two variants postulated for the 'Uqayl transmissions (*yarḡufu fu'ādu-hū* and *ay ibn 'ammi*) are indeed present in it; see the relevant texts in al-Buḥārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*¹¹⁴ and al-Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il*¹¹⁵ (who both quote the report on the authority of 'Uqayl). We also notice that, in al-Bayhaqī's 'Uqayl version, the beginning of the tradition is absent, which is fully in accordance with Muslim's claim.¹¹⁶ Al-Buḥārī, too, in the chapters *aḥādīṭ al-anbiyā'* and *at-tafsīr* of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, lists several short versions of the 'Uqayl transmission, two of which lack the initial passage as well.¹¹⁷ It is, however, not missing from the long 'Uqayl version al-Buḥārī quotes in the chapter *kayfa kāna bad' al-waḥy* and which covers the entire text of the ḥadīth except for the *fatrah* annex.¹¹⁸ It is also part of another short version included in the chapter *at-tafsīr*.¹¹⁹ Both versions were probably passed on side by side for a time.¹²⁰

The edited text of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf* has, as Muslim claims in the case of the ‘Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma‘mar version, the variants *tarğufu bawādiru-hū* and *ay ibn ‘ammi*. But contrary to Muslim’s assertion, it *does* have *lā yuḥzī-ka llāh* (and not *lā yuḥzinu-ka llāh*).¹²¹

In further sub-versions of the ‘Abd ar-Razzāq version, we at least once find *yarğufu fu ‘ādu-hū* (in al-Wāḥidī)¹²² in addition to the more common *tarğufu bawādiru-hū* (e.g. in Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal¹²³ and Abū Nu‘aym).¹²⁴ Moreover, each text has *yuḥzī-ka llāh*.

A very interesting variant not signalled by Muslim, but by al-Buḥārī’s commentator Ibn Ḥaḡar, is *al-kitāb al-‘ibrānī/al-kitāb al-‘arabī* and *yaktubu min al-inḡīl bi-l-‘ibrānīyah/bi-l-‘arabīyah* (concerning the script Waraqaḥ ibn Nawfal can read).¹²⁵ Only al-Buḥārī in the unmixed, complete ‘Uqayl version¹²⁶ and aṭ-Ṭayālīsī in a version according to Ṣālīḥ ibn Abī l-Aḥḍar¹²⁷ have *al-kitāb al-‘ibrānī*. Elsewhere, the tradition always reads *al-kitāb al-‘arabī*, even in the other mixed versions quoted by al-Buḥārī (on the authority of Yūnus + ‘Uqayl¹²⁸ and Ma‘mar + ‘Uqayl)¹²⁹ as well as in al-Bayḥaqī’s ‘Uqayl version which is shortened at the beginning.¹³⁰

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal¹³¹ noticed that ‘Abdallāh ibn al-Mubārak, who transmitted on the authority of both Ma‘mar and Yūnus, was uncertain whether *ar-ru ‘yā aṣ-ṣādiqah* or *ar-ru ‘yā aṣ-ṣālīḥah* was the correct reading. But the latter variant was transmitted by al-Buḥārī on the authority of ‘Uqayl.¹³²

In some of the cases outlined above, the textual differences are caused by graphical variants which occur independently from particular transmissions. This clearly applies to the pair *yuḥzī-ka/yuḥzinu-ka*, which can only result from careless punctuation or the retroactive addition of diacritical points in an unpointed (or only partially pointed) transmitted text. Also, *aṣ-ṣādiqah/aṣ-ṣālīḥah* is more of a graphical than an aural variant. As for *fu ‘ādu-hū* vs. *bawādiru-hū*, the former is a typical *lectio facilior* in copying a (probably unpointed) text and can hardly depend on an aural mishap.

A graphical variant could also be behind (*al-kitāb*) *al-‘ibrānī/al-‘arabī* and *bi-l-‘ibrānīyah/bi-l-‘arabīyah*: the respective first variants are akin to a *lectio difficilior*. Thus, they occur much less frequently than the second.

Traditionists studying the shape of particular *ḥadīṭ* texts were mainly interested in graphical variants. Their emergence shows how justified, but at the same time how theoretical, the traditionists’ demand for ‘heard transmission’ (*ar-riwāyah al-masmū‘ah*) really was: the variants in question could never have arisen in ‘heard transmission’. Therefore, the actual transmission practice must have assumed a quite different form: it very often consisted of ‘mere copying’ (*al-kitāba*). By the generation of the *teachers* of the canonical *ḥadīṭ* compilers al-Buḥārī (810–70), Muslim (817–75) and even as early as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (780–855) writing had actually become the preponderant medium of transmission in teaching.

Traditionists did not even notice smaller omissions and rearrangements of the text. One surprising example of this practice is the following: aṭ-Ṭabarī, who asserts that he had received this tradition (LV II) via an-Nu‘mān as well as via Yūnus (LV I) (but only quotes LV II in full),¹³³ must have noticed the substantial

differences in arrangement and wording between the two texts, but does not mention them at all. On the other hand, he indicates the (admittedly important) fact that Yūnus does not have an additional passage given by an-Nu'mān which specifies that *sūrah* 68 was the second oldest revelation, etc. (section 7a of our outline).

Muslim, who states¹³⁴ that the initial part of the 'Uqayl version known to him was missing,¹³⁵ does not signal that the Yūnus version known to him lacked the *fatrah* annex. In his Buḥārī commentary, Ibn Ḥaḡar on the other hand claims¹³⁶ that the annex only occurred in Ma'mar's version.

2.2 Evidence for a possible 'Urwah recension

2.2a The traditions according to Hišām ibn 'Urwah <'Urwah

We can confidently assert that az-Zuhrī himself disseminated the tradition in question in his lectures. The content of the original Zuhrī version can be reconstructed with some certainty from later transmissions; its wording, however, only partially and approximately.

Did az-Zuhrī actually hear the tradition from 'Urwah? This question can only be answered on the basis of transmissions by another or several of 'Urwah's students who also passed on the tradition or parts of it on the authority of 'Urwah, but independently from az-Zuhrī. In fact, there are such traditions. Three of them are attributed to 'Urwah's son Hišām.

Tradition 1

On the authority of 'Affān ibn Muslim (d. 220/835)¹³⁷ < Ḥammād ibn Salamah (d. 167/783–4),¹³⁸ Ibn Sa'd quotes the following report by 'Urwah's son Hišām from his father:

The messenger of God said: 'O Ḥadīḡah, I see light and hear a voice. I fear I am a *kāhin*' (diviner, soothsayer). Hereupon, she said: 'God does not do this to you, o son of 'Abdallāh. You speak truthfully, you deliver that which is committed to your trust [scil. to its owners] and you bind tightly the ties of relationship (by kind behaviour to your relatives)' (*taṣduqu l-ḥadīḡ wa-tu'addī l-amānah wa-taṣīlu r-raḡim*¹³⁹).¹⁴⁰

The contents of this tradition correspond exactly to point 5 of the Zuhrī recension, i.e. to the element of the conglomerate we named 'Ḥadīḡah narration II'.

Did this tradition (SV III) in fact originate with 'Urwah? Most likely yes. Its *isnād* contains evidence of its authenticity: it stops with 'Urwah, i.e. it has not been 'raised' back to 'Ā'iṣah. On all accounts, this is a tradition which is independent of the Zuhrī recension – an imitator of the recension would also have imitated the *isnād* and named 'Ā'iṣah as original informant. The shape of the text, when compared to that of az-Zuhrī, provides more evidence for its independence and

potential authenticity: with the transmission methods practised in the days of ‘Urwah,¹⁴¹ substantial textual differences between versions transmitted on one and the same authority are only to be expected. In contrast to – and in more detail than – az-Zuhrī, Muḥammad says in Hišām ibn ‘Urwah’s version not only that he ‘fears for his soul’, but that he fears he has become a *kāhīn* (diviner, soothsayer) because of his visions (‘light’) and auditory sensations (‘voices’). This could be a genuine feature of the original ‘Urwah tradition attenuated by az-Zuhrī in his version.

On the other hand, it is remarkable that the three parallel phrases of Ḥadīḡah’s praise (*taṣduqu l-ḥadīṡ* etc.) in the Zuhrī version are preserved verbatim in this text.

Admittedly, in its extant version, this report is extremely short. Most of all, it lacks the main ingredient: the account of the revelation experience with the *iqra’* motif. Did ‘Urwah disseminate the tradition in this *short* form¹⁴² or has it been abridged at a later stage of transmission? We cannot answer this question with any certainty, but the second possibility seems more likely: first, ‘Urwah’s historical *ḥadīṡs* in particular are normally not short, but of considerable length.¹⁴³ Secondly, Ibn Sa’d only quotes such short or abridged *ḥadīṡs* in the relevant chapter on *ḡikr nuzūl al-waḡy*: the Zuhrī recension also occurs in an extremely shortened form in this chapter. Most likely, therefore, Ibn Sa’d was responsible for the abridgement. We can thus assume that Hišām ibn ‘Urwah heard and transmitted a more extensive version from his father – in other words, the present tradition is most probably a fragment of a longer report by ‘Urwah.

The next tradition clearly demonstrates that Hišām ibn ‘Urwah indeed received more information about the beginnings of the revelation from his father and passed it on.

Tradition 2

Az-Zubayr ibn Bakkār (d. 256/870)¹⁴⁴ transmitted the following report on the authority of Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Abdallāh (d. 233/848)¹⁴⁵ < aḡ-Ḍaḡḡāk ibn ‘Uṡmān (d. 180/796)¹⁴⁶ ‘Abd ar-Raḡmān ibn Abī z-Zīnād¹⁴⁷ < Hišām ibn ‘Urwah < ‘Urwah:

Ḥadīḡah bint Ḥuwaylid used to (visit and) tell Warāqah what came to the Prophet [i.e. what he received] according to his own [scil. the Prophet’s] report. Warāqah said: ‘By God, if what he claims is really true, then the great *Nāmūs* visits him, the *Nāmūs* of Jesus, about which the People of the Book only provide information at a (high) price. And if he [Muḥammad] proclaims (his message) during my lifetime, then, I will support him for the sake of God.’¹⁴⁸

This is part of the Warāqah narration, corresponding to element no. 7 of the Zuhrī recension. In this tradition as well, the *isnād* stops with ‘Urwah, suggesting that it was transmitted independently of the Zuhrī recension. Additional support for this claim comes from the text of the tradition: given the substantial differences

between the two, the tradition cannot have been derived from the Zuhri recension. Interestingly, in this tradition, Ḥadiḡah alone goes to visit Waraqah. In the Zuhri recension, she is accompanied by Muḥammad. In this respect, Hišām's report parallels Ibn Ishāq's recension of the Waraqah motif (which is not traced back to 'Urwah).

One feature of Hišām's tradition we do not encounter in other versions of the Waraqah narration is Waraqah's claim that the 'People of the Book' only provide information about *Nāmūs* 'at a price' and that he is the *Nāmūs* of Jesus (other versions identify him as the *Nāmūs* of Moses).

For our purposes, it is particularly significant that this second fragment suggests that Hišām also heard from his father 'Urwah about the celestial apparition and, by extension, the transmission of a first revelation: Waraqah's mention of the *Nāmūs* as the reason for the apparition requires that there must have been another, prior report about the event. However, this fragment does not contain any firm evidence for 'Urwah's claim that *sūrah* 96: 1–5 was the first revelation.

The person responsible for abridging the text and removing the preceding report was also in this case most likely the compiler. For az-Zubayr ibn Bakkār, the story about the first revelation is only relevant for the information it contains about Waraqah ibn Nawfal.

Tradition 3

Al-'Uṭāridī transmitted the following report on the authority of Yūnus (ibn Bukayr) < Hišām ibn 'Urwah < 'Urwah (< Ḥadiḡah); in aṭ-Ṭabarī, it comes with the *isnād* Abū Kurayb (Muḥammad ibn al-'Alā') (st. 247/861)¹⁴⁹ < Wakī < Hišām ibn 'Urwah < 'Urwah:

Gabriel delayed (the revelation) to the Prophet. This considerably saddened him [scil. the Prophet]. Then, Ḥadiḡah said: 'Because of the sadness we notice in you, I believe that your Lord hates you.' Thereupon, the following was revealed: 'By the white forenoon and the brooding night! Thy Lord has neither forsaken thee nor hates thee ...' (*sūrah* 93).¹⁵⁰

This tradition explicitly names Gabriel as the bearer of revelations, further evidence that Hišām ibn 'Urwah heard a report from his father also about the transmission of a first revelation. The report refers to the period after the *fatrah* (temporary suspension of the revelation) which, according to this tradition, ended with the revelation of this message, *sūrah* 93.

The three traditions discussed above demonstrate that the Hišām ibn 'Urwah recension contains various elements we also find in the Zuhri recension, namely:

- 1 the Ḥadiḡah II narration (corresponding to element 5 of the Zuhri recension);
- 2 the Waraqah narration (element 7); and
- 3 the *fatrah* narration (element 9).

We can safely infer that it contained an additional shared element:

- 4 a narration about the first revelation mediated by an apparition which Waraḡah identifies as *Nāmūs* (element 2) and the Prophet, somewhat later, as Gabriel (element 3).

We still have to admit, however, that none of the three fragments contains firm evidence for 'Urwah's claim that *sūrah* 96: 1–5 was the first revelation.

2.2b *The Ibn Lahī'ah recension*

We have at our disposal two more recensions of our tradition traced back to 'Urwah. First, we will turn to the version reported on the authority of Ibn Lahī'ah (d. 174/790)¹⁵¹ < Abū l-Aswad Yafīm 'Urwah (d. 131/748 or slightly later)¹⁵² < 'Urwah. For this version, however, the transmission situation is extremely problematic. We only have two different, late versions: a more elaborate text mixed with other recensions from al-Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il* (LV IV)¹⁵³ and a fragmentary version in two parts (SV IV) in Ibn Ḥaḡar.¹⁵⁴

At first, al-Bayhaqī quotes a *ḥadīṭ* for which he does not provide an *isnād*; he simply states *fi-mā balaḡa-nā* ('according to what we have heard'). After the text of the tradition, he adds a note to the effect that Abū Lahī'ah reported this tradition on the authority of Abū l-Aswad < 'Urwah (the *isnād* is not 'raised' back to 'Ā'iṣah!) but shortened it in a few places and made certain additions in others. (One of the additions which al-Bayhaqī later claims did *not* originate from 'Urwah is the narration of the opening of the chest, which has been placed before the revelation experience.) Clearly, we have to be very cautious in interpreting this information.

I will nevertheless attempt to reconstruct the tradition al-Bayhaqī ascribes to 'Urwah (LV IV):

- 1 Muḡammad's dream visions.
- 2 His fear. Conversation with Ḥadīḡah on the subject. Ḥadīḡah encourages the Prophet.
- 3 Appearance of Gabriel at the highest point of Mecca (*ufuq* narration). He asks Muḡammad to sit down on a (short-pile, yellow-green) carpet encrusted with jacinths and pearls (*bisāt ka-hay'at ad-durnūk fi-hi l-yāqūt wa-l-lu'lu'*) and proclaims the glad tidings. Muḡammad calms down. [Addendum: according to the addition of al-Bayhaqī mentioned above, 'Urwah allegedly reported in this place that Gabriel dug a well and taught Muḡammad the ablutions and the prayer ritual.¹⁵⁵]
- 4 (Single) request of the angel for Muḡammad to recite. His reaction and reply: 'How shall I recite' (*kayfa aqra'u*). Revelation of *sūrah* 96: 1–5 (*iqra'* narration).
- 5 Muḡammad returns to Ḥadīḡah and reports the revelation experience.
- 6 Ḥadīḡah again encourages him (as before, but more elaborate).

- 7 She visits ‘Addās, a Christian slave of ‘Utbah ibn Rabī‘ah ibn ‘Abd Šams, to make inquiries about Gabriel. ‘Addās provides the requisite information.
- 8 Ḥadiġah visits Waraqah ibn Nawfal. The narrator informs us about the Christian Waraqah and the *ḥanīf* Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn Nufayl (already dead at this point).
- 9 Waraqah’s prediction (here expressed more in the form of a supposition) and his promise to obey and support Muḥammad. Waraqah’s death.

This is the full short version (SV IV) in literal translation:¹⁵⁶

The beginning of the mission [lit.: the affair] of the messenger of God was that, in a dream, he saw Gabriel in Aġyād.¹⁵⁷ He then went out to relieve himself. Gabriel called him: ‘O Muḥammad, O Muḥammad!’ The messenger of God looked three times to his right and left but did not see anybody. Then, he raised his eyes and behold! He [scil. the angel] stood, having drawn one of his legs to the other (*tānī ihdā riġlay-hi ‘alā l-uḥrā*), on the horizon (*ufuq* narration) and said: ‘O Muḥammad: [I am] Gabriel, Gabriel!’ to calm him down. Thereupon, the Prophet fled. When he met other people and glanced up, he could no longer see anything. Then he ran away from the people. ...

Thereupon, Gabriel called him and he [scil. Muḥammad] fled. Now, Gabriel appeared to him from (Mount) Ḥirā’. [Ibn Ḥaġar reports:] ‘Then, the story of his (scil. the angel’s) request to recite is related: “Recite in the name of your Lord!” All the while, Muḥammad beheld Gabriel; he had two wings of jacinth, which dazzled the eyes ... In the recension of Abū l-Aswad’s *Maġāzī* (that he transmitted) on the authority of ‘Urwah (it reads) that he [scil. Muḥammad] said: “How shall I recite (*kayfa aqra’u*)”.’

Obviously, the revelation experience as reported in this tradition (most of all in LV IV) has a markedly different character than in the previously analysed traditions: it is a ‘more intimate encounter than the eerie vision in the cave’.¹⁵⁸ Note in this context the valuable carpet¹⁵⁹ which the angel provided for the future Prophet’s comfort! When we compare it with the Zuhri > ‘Urwah recension in particular, we notice several differences. In both versions reported on the authority of Ibn Lahī‘ah, the angel (in SV IV: Gabriel) appears – after the introductory dream, but before the revelation of the *sūrah* – to the Prophet on the horizon (*ufuq* motif),¹⁶⁰ more precisely at the highest point of Mecca or in Aġyād.¹⁶¹ Thus, in this version the *ufuq* motif precedes the *iqra’* motif. The latter appears in a modified and, in a few details, shortened form: the cave is omitted; the angel does not force Muḥammad and only once requests him to recite (the latter at least according to the long version). The short version preserves the reference to Mount Ḥirā’ from the original *iqra’* narration. The *taḥannuṭ* motif, which in az-Zuhri’s version follows directly after the dream motif, is absent. Instead, LV IV apparently contains an extra motif: Gabriel teaches Muḥammad the ablutions and the prayer ritual. In addition, we notice conspicuous amplifications and

embellishments compared to the original story: in the short version, the angelic vision is enriched with fantastic details; in the long version, the carpet is elaborately described.

Characteristic for this recension is, however, Muḥammad's reaction to the request of the angel to recite:

kayfa aqra'u,

how shall I recite?

In spite of the differences between the Zuhrī recension (LV I/II) and this recension (LV IV/SV IV) and between the two Ibn Lahī'ah versions compared to each other and irrespective of their additions and embellishments, we clearly still have the same story, which ultimately came from 'Urwah. Central motifs and their sequence generally agree in both versions and between the Ibn Lahī'ah recension and that of az-Zuhrī < 'Urwah: Muḥammad's dream visions—arrival of the angel—his request to recite—revelation of *sūrah* 96: 1–5. Additionally, the long version (LV IV) shares the following motifs with the Zuhrī < 'Urwah recension (LV I/II): Muḥammad seeking Ḥadīḡah's advice and her encouragement; her first answer here and there is *abšir, fa-inna llāh [lā] yaşna'u bi-ka illā ḡayran*, 'rejoice, for the Lord only does what is good for you'; the visit to Waraqaḡ and his prophecy and promise to help the future Prophet.¹⁶²

We should not draw too far-reaching conclusions from this problematic version. It illustrates the fact that, apart from the usual unconscious and unintended modifications, conscious and intentional interventions are also sometimes part of the transmission process: alterations, embellishments and fantastic amplifications. Muslim *ḡadīḡ* criticism puts the responsibility squarely on Ibn Lahī'ah's shoulders: he was classified as 'weak' (*ḡa'īf*).¹⁶³ In any case, we can draw the following two conclusions:

- 1 Our *ḡadīḡ* on the first revelation experience is traced back to 'Urwah not only via two lines of transmission (az-Zuhrī and Hişām ibn 'Urwah), but (at least) three (together with Abū l-Aswad Yatīm 'Urwah). The long, combined tradition (the conglomerate) is ascribed to 'Urwah by not one, but two transmitters, namely az-Zuhrī and Abū l-Aswad.
- 2 The three recensions (or at least the Zuhrī and the Hişām recensions) are sufficiently different from each other to render reciprocal dependencies (imitation) unlikely. A common source and different transmissions, taking into account the contemporary 'free' transmission practices, however, are very likely.

Thus, it becomes more and more probable that it was not az-Zuhrī, but 'Urwah who first transmitted the conglomerate and that the former actually received it from the latter. In all likelihood, our tradition concerning the first revelation experience was already known and disseminated in the first century AH.

2.2c The tradition according to Yazīd ibn Rūmān < 'Urwah

While I will not analyse a third, very late tradition about the first revelation experience ascribed to 'Urwah – a conglomerate which partly differs from the versions we know – as an additional piece of evidence for the existence of a 'Urwah recension, I will at least introduce it for the sake of completeness.

Despite its different narrative frame, the (abbreviated) *iqra'* narration is clearly recognizable in this *ḥadīṭ*,¹⁶⁴ which is traced back via Yazīd ibn Rūmān (d. 130/747),¹⁶⁵ a client of the Zubayrid family, to 'Urwah < 'Ā'iṣah. This conglomerate combines the following motifs/narrations: the *ufuq* narration (in this version, Ḥadīḡah plays a part: during the angelic vision, she prompts Muḥammad to conceal his head under her clothing, etc.);¹⁶⁶ the *iqra'* narration (linked to a report about Gabriel digging a well and teaching Muḥammad the ablutions and the prayer ritual); a narrative of how the stones and trees greeted the future Prophet; a report about Ḥadīḡah's conversion. Here are the relevant passages in translation:

One day, the messenger of God saw a figure (*šaḥṣan*) between heaven and earth in Ġiyād al-Aṣḡar. Gabriel appeared to him, greeted him and spread a precious carpet encrusted with jacinths and chrysolites (*fa-basaṭa bisāṭan karīman mukallan bi-l-yāqūt wa-z-zabarġad*). He then dug up the ground, from which a well sprung up ... He brought to him the glad tidings of his prophethood and revealed to him: 'Recite in the name of your Lord, who has created ...'

The parallels to the previously discussed long version according to Ibn Lahī'ah < Abū l-Aswad < 'Urwah are remarkable, most of all the shared combination of motifs: Gabriel sits the Prophet down on a precious carpet and, after digging the well, teaches him the ablutions and the prayer ritual. It is highly likely that one recension depends on the other or that they influenced each other (imitation).¹⁶⁷

2.3 Is 'Ā'iṣah the original informant?

As we have seen, az-Zuhrī's version of the *iqra'* narration was most likely based on 'Urwah and the latter had probably already reported it in conjunction with a conglomerate identical or very similar to that later transmitted by az-Zuhrī. But did 'Urwah actually receive the *ḥadīṭ* from 'Ā'iṣah?

In principle, it would certainly have been possible for 'Urwah to discuss Muḥammad's first revelation experience (which, however, took place long before her birth)¹⁶⁸ with his aunt 'Ā'iṣah¹⁶⁹ and that he therefore felt justified in naming her as his informant.

In support of this version of events, we could quote a relatively early report which transmits the *iqra'* narration – as part of yet another conglomerate (this one narrating *inter alia* the legend of the opening of the chest)¹⁷⁰ – on the authority of 'Ā'iṣah, but not 'Urwah. The *ḥadīṭ*¹⁷¹ is part of aṭ-Ṭayālīsī's *Musnad*¹⁷² and later enters into Abū Nu'aym's *Dalā'il an-nubūwah*.¹⁷³

Aṭ-Ṭayālīsī records the following *isnād*: Abū Dāwūd (aṭ-Ṭayālīsī) < Ḥammād ibn Salamah (d. 167/783–4)¹⁷⁴ < Abū 'Imrān al-Ġawnī¹⁷⁵ < 'a man' (*raġul*) < 'Ā'īṣah. Abū Nu'aym has this *isnād*: Abū Bakr ibn Ḥallād < al-Ḥārīt ibn Abī Usāmah < Dāwūd ibn al-Miḥbar < Ḥammād ibn Salamah < Abū 'Imrān al-Ġawnī < Yazīd ibn Bābanūs¹⁷⁶ < 'Ā'īṣah.

If we took into account only these two sources for the *ḥadīth*, Ḥammād ibn Salamah would be the CL (he seems to have collected and disseminated several versions of the story about the first revelation experience).¹⁷⁷ However, we have to allow for the possibility that the conglomerate was already compiled and disseminated by Ḥammād's 'predecessor' al-Ġawnī.¹⁷⁸ The absence of additional *isnād* testimonies prevents us from confirming this hypothesis.

The *ḥadīth* consists of the following elements: the *taḥannuṭ* narration; the story of the greeting of the future Prophet by stones and trees; the *ufuq* narration; the legend of the opening of the chest, which clearly occupies centre stage and frames the *iqra*' narration; (again) the story of the stones and trees.

In this tradition, the *iqra*' narration is closer to az-Zuhrī's version (and to another version to be discussed below) than to that of Ibn Lahī'ah: it 'still' contains the (older) motif of pressing the Prophet but does 'not yet' contain the (more recent) carpet motif. In translation, the relevant passage is as follows:¹⁷⁹

He then put a seal on my back, so that I felt the touch of the seal [end of the legend of the opening of the chest]. He then said to me: 'Read¹⁸⁰ in the name of your Lord!' But I had never read something written before (*wa-lam aqra' kitāban qaṭṭu*). He grabbed me by the throat so that I was about to cry and then said to me: 'Read in the name of your Lord ...' He (Muḥammad) said: 'I will never forget any (of this). He then weighed me against a man and I outweighed him ...'

Admittedly, the tradition is not a very strong argument *in favour* of 'Ā'īṣah as 'Urwah's original informant. The anonymous 'man' – or one of the transmitters listed after him in the *isnād* such as al-Ġawnī – does not need to have committed any conscious act of forgery; he may only have recombined several narratives and motifs circulating at the time. He may even have been convinced that he was reporting a tradition (or several of them) originating with 'Ā'īṣah. The general 'an between the anonymous 'man' and 'Ā'īṣah in the *isnād* indicates that the transmitter does not claim that any personal contact between the two had taken place.

It is, however, still very doubtful whether the redactor of the conglomerate did not know one of the versions originating from 'Urwah. The 'raising' of the *isnād* back to 'Ā'īṣah could have happened on the basis of the familiarity of the transmitter with the Zuhrī recension, but it could also have taken place spontaneously.¹⁸¹

The canonical collections did not include the tradition; one of the reasons might have been the anonymous transmitter 'an 'Ā'īṣah. Incidentally, Abū Nu'aym's later version replaced him with a known historical figure, al-Ġawnī's teacher Yazīd ibn Bābanūs. (This is of course a characteristic case of an *isnād* being improved!)

However, there is one substantial argument *against* ‘Ā’iṣah as ‘Urwah’s original informant which outweighs the evidence presented so far: the fact that not all recensions reported on the authority of ‘Urwah have an *isnād* leading back to her. In addition, there are strong indications that ‘Urwah’s report did not originate from ‘Ā’iṣah, but a source different from the one named by az-Zuhrī.

2.4 The Ibn Ishāq recension

For the following discussion, we will come back to an observation made by Sprenger. In his study of the first revelation experience, he noted that a recension which covers the same narrative ground and which is similar, in places up to the point of identical wording (LV III), to the Zuhrī recension (LV I/II) must draw on the same source despite its different *isnād*.¹⁸² The report in question (LV III) is transmitted by Ibn Hišām¹⁸³ and aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁸⁴ on the authority of Ibn Ishāq; in Ibn Hišām’s work, it follows almost immediately upon the parallel tradition SV I, reported according to az-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’iṣah with only one other short tradition intervening, which reports the greeting of Muḥammad by stones and trees (cf. below, p. 61). We have conjectured that Ibn Ishāq shortened one of the two reports (SV I) due to their similarity. LV III can also be found in the ‘Uṭāridī redaction of Ibn Ishāq’s work¹⁸⁵ which Sprenger did not know. There, it occurs in the same position as in Ibn Hišām’s text, albeit without an *isnād*. The reasons for its omission remain to be investigated.¹⁸⁶

2.4a Transmission, content, motifs and character

The tradition in question has the *isnād* Ibn Ishāq < Wahb ibn Kaysān (d. 127/744–5 or 129/746–7)¹⁸⁷ < ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr (d. 68/687–8);¹⁸⁸ cf. Figure 2.2. Ibn Ishāq explains that Wahb was a client of the Zubayrid family and that ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr (d. 73/692), ‘Urwah’s older brother and at the time anti-caliph in Medina, asked ‘Ubayd (a *qāṣṣ*, i.e. preacher and popular teller of tales)¹⁸⁹ in a public gathering to relate the Prophet’s first revelation experience.

These are the contents of the story according to the most complete version reported by aṭ-Ṭabarī:

- 1 Muḥammad’s yearly, month-long religious observances on Mount Ḥirā’ (in accordance with pre-Islamic customs of the Qurayš): before returning home, he feeds the poor and visits the Ka’bah (*taḥannuṭ* narration).
- 2 Unexpected appearance of Gabriel on Mount Ḥirā’ during Ramaḍān of the year of his mission; Muḥammad accompanied by his wife (Ḥadiṣah).
- 3 (Direct speech of Muḥammad:) Appearance of the angel at night in his sleep with a brocade cloth with an inscription.¹⁹⁰ Twice,¹⁹¹ the angel asks him to read or recite (*iqra’*); twice, Muḥammad is beset by the angel (who presses and harasses him with the cloth)¹⁹² and answers: ‘I do not read/recite!’ or ‘What shall I read/recite?’ (*mā [dā] aqra’u*).¹⁹³ After that, revelation of *sūrah*

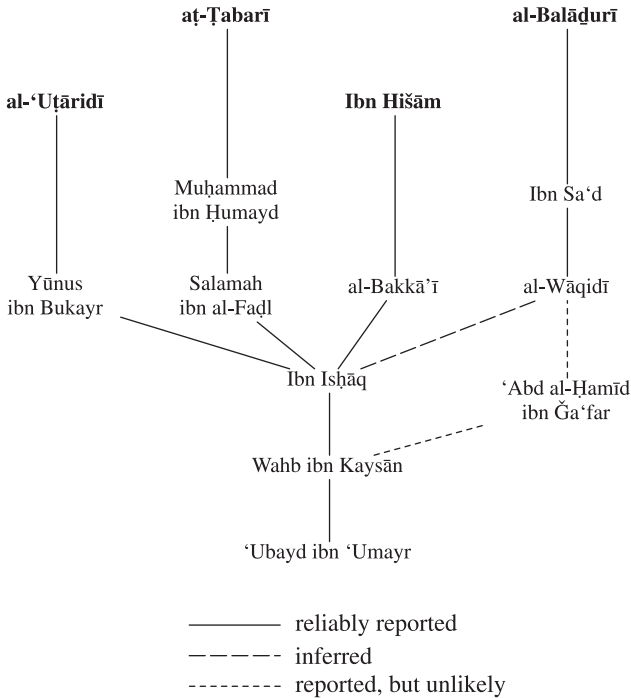


Figure 2.2 The Ibn Ishāq recension of the *iqra'* narration

- 96: 1–5, which Muḥammad repeats. The angel disappears and Muḥammad wakes up (*iqra'* narration).
- 4 Muḥammad fears he is a poet or possessed by a demon. He climbs a mountain with the intention of committing suicide.
 - 5 Unexpected apostrophe from heaven (aural apparition): ‘O Muḥammad, you are the messenger of God, and I am Gabriel!’ and vision: Gabriel in human shape on the horizon. Muḥammad refrains from killing himself. The vision persists for some time (*ufuq* narration).
 - 6 Ḥadīḡah sends envoys to search for Muḥammad. The angel disappears and Muḥammad returns home.
 - 7 Muḥammad goes to Ḥadīḡah and embraces her. The couple’s conversation (‘Where have you been?’ etc.) He says that he fears he is a poet or possessed by a demon. She vehemently contradicts him and encourages and praises him (with parallel phrases). Her hope that Muḥammad is ‘the prophet of this people’ (Ḥadīḡah narration II).
 - 8 Ḥadīḡah visits her cousin Waraqah. Narrator gives information about the latter.
 - 9 Ḥadīḡah’s conversation with Waraqah about her husband’s experience. Waraqah assumes that the angel was the ‘great Nāmūs’ and Muḥammad the ‘prophet of this people’.

- 10 Ḥadīḡah's return to her husband and her report about her visit to Waraqah. Muḥammad feels relieved by it.
- 11 Muḥammad and Waraqah meet at the Ka'bah. Muḥammad describes his experience. Waraqah identifies Muḥammad as 'the prophet of this people' and the angel as the 'great Nāmūs'. He predicts the Prophet's expulsion and expresses his desire to help him, whenever possible (Waraqah narration).
- 12 Muḥammad's return. He feels relieved by Waraqah's encouragement.

In general, we can say that in this recension (LV III), the story is more elaborate than az-Zuhrī's recension (LV I/II). It contains more details and narrative padding and some repetitions. Its most conspicuous characteristic is that the 'eerie encounter' (the Prophet is also forced to recite!) happens at night in his sleep and not while awake. Thus, it is 'a kind of nightmare'.¹⁹⁴

2.4b The different versions: Ibn Hišām, al-'Uṭāridī, aṭ-Ṭabarī

Of the three versions belonging to the Ibn Ishāq recension, those of aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁹⁵ and Ibn Hišām¹⁹⁶ resemble each other most closely. Variants are for the most part little different from what we would expect in normal written transmission¹⁹⁷ and could be mapped in a critical apparatus. But Ibn Hišām abridges Ibn Ishāq's text. His abridgements affect mainly two passages in sections 4 and 7 of our outline. In aṭ-Ṭabarī's and al-'Uṭāridī's unabridged versions of the Ibn Ishāq recension, Muḥammad states (referring to the vision) that he fears he is a poet or is possessed by a demon (twice, in sections 4 and 7); in the former passage (section 4), directly after the vision, he expresses his intention to commit suicide. In Ibn Hišām's abridged version, these passages are eliminated. Abridgements affecting section 7 also remove Ḥadīḡah's praise (expressed in parallel phrases) with which we are familiar from the Zuhrī and Hišām ibn 'Urwah recensions (LV I/II and SV III). In aṭ-Ṭabarī's and al-'Uṭāridī's unabridged versions, the praise takes the form *min šidq ḥadīṡi-ka wa-'iẓm amānati-ka*, etc.

Without doubt, these were conscious deletions. In accordance with the principle Ibn Hišām set out in his introduction,¹⁹⁸ he eliminated passages he considered objectionable and material which could offend people.¹⁹⁹ Conclusive evidence for this explanation is the fact that, in the text following the respective abridged passages, Ibn Hišām had to remove sentences which refers back to the deleted event ('This kept me from realizing my intention' in section 5 and 'This partly allayed the fear which I felt' in section 12). These are not unconscious, 'innocent' modifications frequently affecting oral transmission, but intentional redactional interventions.

The 'Uṭāridī version²⁰⁰ of the Ibn Ishāq recension differs more from the two other versions than they do from each other. The main difference is probably due to an error in transmission: al-'Uṭāridī's version lacks an *isnād*, so that its text seems to continue the previous, shorter tradition (reporting the greeting of the future Prophet by trees and stones) and share its *isnād*. It is unlikely that al-'Uṭāridī consciously conflated the two texts; there is no reason why he should have suppressed the 'correct' *isnād*.

A second fact confirms that the loss of text was most likely caused by a transmission error: we find more gaps in the text at the beginning in a passage immediately after the missing *isnād*. (These gaps, however, do not affect important components of the tradition.) In addition, the text between the two largest gaps²⁰¹ displays the highest degree of variation compared to the parallel passages in Ibn Hišām and aṭ-Ṭabarī. The latter of the two gaps concerns the ‘brocade cloth with an inscription’, which the angel carries in the parallel text; this, however, may be a conscious deletion by the redactor, al-‘Uṭāridī.

In any case, the text *after* this initial passage (from the revelation of the *sūrah* onwards) is, except for a few minor variants and gaps, almost identical with aṭ-Ṭabarī. Even the sections about the Prophet’s fear of being possessed and his suicide plan, suppressed by Ibn Hišām, appear in the text – a verbatim match with aṭ-Ṭabarī.²⁰²

Comparing the three versions derived from Ibn Ishāq, we can say that they are all based on one (largely) homogeneous text by Ibn Ishāq. In this archetype, three traditions on the beginnings of revelation followed each other in this order: SV I—another *ḥadīṭ* on the greeting of trees and stones—LV III. This sequence was preserved in the redactions of Ibn Hišām and al-‘Uṭāridī.

In Ibn Hišām’s redaction, however, Ibn Ishāq’s text was consciously reworked (and shortened in some key passages); in al-‘Uṭāridī’s redaction, parts of the text have been poorly transmitted. The third redaction, that by aṭ-Ṭabarī, preserved it most faithfully, perhaps even (almost) in its original form. A reconstruction of Ibn Ishāq’s archetype is therefore in this case possible. A purely oral or a purely written transmission from Ibn Ishāq to the redactors can be excluded: the former cannot explain the substantial parallels (verbatim correspondences covering long passages) in the texts of the three versions, the latter (understood as the closest possible reproduction of a finalized written original) cannot explain the variations we still find. The safest course would be to follow the biographical sources and explain variations on the one hand with the peculiarities and shortcomings of the teaching system they describe in some detail (e.g. text loss in dictation) and, on the other, with conscious redactional interventions on the part of the transmitters, who had their own ideas about the text.

Excursus: Caedmon and Muḥammad

The Scandinavian studies expert K. von See²⁰³ pointed to an exact parallel to the reports about Muḥammad’s first revelation experience in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* (completed in 731) (IV, 24) by the Venerable Bede (d. 735 in north-east England): the story of the illiterate lay brother Caedmon who received the gift of praising God in the language of the people, i.e. English. The details of the report – dream vision of an angel; the angel calls Caedmon by name and asks him to sing (‘canta mihi aliquid’; cf. *iqra’* in Ibn Ishāq’s recension); the first request is refused (‘nescio cantare’; cf. *mā aqra’u*), after the second request, Caedmon asks *what* he is supposed to sing (‘quid debeo cantare’; cf. *māḍā aqra’u* ?); the third is followed by the angel’s recitation of a song about the Creator – closely resemble

those of the *iqra'* narration. Bede's report is closer to the recension of Ibn Ishāq (the vision takes place while Caedmon is asleep) than to the Zuhri version. The dependency of Bede's story on the Arabic report is irrefragable; von See suggests that the transmission could have taken place sometime between 726 and 730, a period of peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians in Europe.²⁰⁴ Von See's discovery is extremely important for the contentious debate about the existence and extent of medieval 'literary' contacts between Europe and the Orient. For our purposes, Bede's story confirms that the report about Muḥammad's first revelation – in the form taken up and elaborated by Ibn Ishāq (the *qiṣṣah* version²⁰⁵) – already existed decades before the definitive edition of Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-maǧāzī* (established at the behest of the caliph al-Manṣūr; after 760)²⁰⁶ and was spread in this form throughout the world. It stands to reason that the *quṣṣāṣ*, lay preachers migrating with the Muslim armies across the straits of Gibraltar, were the agents of the widespread dissemination of the story into Christian Europe.

2.4c Relation to the Zuhri recension: a common source?

The differences between the Ibn Ishāq and Zuhri recension are striking and have been studied previously by a number of scholars:²⁰⁷

- 1 The most substantial difference has already been discussed above:²⁰⁸ the character of the *iqra'* motif. In Ibn Ishāq, the revelation takes place during a kind of nightmare while Muhammad is asleep. In az-Zuhri, he is awake and in a cave. In addition, az-Zuhri does not mention the brocade cloth with writing.
- 2 The *taḥannuṭ* motif is more elaborate in Ibn Ishāq: he reports Muḥammad's stay on Mount Ḥirā' according to the customs of the Qurayṣ who practised *taḥannuṭ* there for a month each year. In az-Zuhri, the Prophet is simply inspired by 'love for solitude'. While, according to Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad arrives at Mount Ḥirā' with his wife, az-Zuhri has him ascend alone, only returning to Mecca occasionally to stock up on supplies. Furthermore, az-Zuhri does not know that Muḥammad feeds the poor on Mount Ḥirā' and subsequently visits the Ka'bah as described by Ibn Ishāq.
- 3 In spite of their agreement on its function to keep Muḥammad from killing himself, the treatment of the *ufuq* motif differs substantially between the two redactions. Ibn Ishāq describes the vision (Gabriel on the horizon) and Muḥammad's conduct in particular (being rooted to the spot, following the vision with his eyes) in some detail, whereas az-Zuhri reports the story in a very reduced form. He does, however, provide details in the *fatrah* annex, transmitted not on the authority of 'Urwah, but of Abū Salamah.
- 4 Twice, Ibn Ishāq relates that after the vision, Muḥammad thought that he was a poet or possessed by a demon. Az-Zuhri simply mentions – in a much attenuated form – that he feared for himself.
- 5 Ḥadiḡah's sending out envoys to look for Muḥammad, reported by Ibn Ishāq, is missing in az-Zuhri.

- 6 Ibn Ishāq has Ḥadīḡah express her hopes that Muḡammad will be the prophet of his people. She then visits Waraqah alone; he confirms her hopes. On returning from Ḥirā', Muḡammad meets Waraqah at the Ka'bah and receives his prediction. In az-Zuhrī's recension, Ḥadīḡah does not talk about Muḡammad's future. They visit Waraqah together to hear his prediction.

In the above passages, Ibn Ishāq's report is more detailed than az-Zuhrī's. The following two motifs on the other hand are only included by az-Zuhrī:

- 1 The 'true dream visions' at the beginning of the story. The motif could be a reminiscence of the fact that, in the version (probably) closer to the original, the revelation took place in a dream.
- 2 The *zammilū-nī* motif (Ḥadīḡah I). In both versions of the Zuhrī recension, we read that the Prophet runs to Ḥadīḡah and exclaims: 'Wrap me up! Wrap me up!' Ibn Ishāq does not mention the incident.

Overall, Ibn Ishāq's narration contains much more (sometimes highly picturesque) detail (the brocade cloth with writing, elaborate description of the angelic vision and Muḡammad's conduct) and narrative embellishments (Muḡammad's feeding of the poor and his yearly pilgrimage, Ḥadīḡah sending envoys, the couple's conversation ('Where have you been?') with Muḡammad embracing Ḥadīḡah). In addition, there are repetitions (Ḥadīḡah expects that Muḡammad is the prophet of his people; Waraqah confirms this twice, at first with the provision that Ḥadīḡah's report is true, then definitively after hearing Muḡammad's own report; repetition of the pilgrimage narration). Some of the repetitions have a formulaic ring:

Ḥadīḡah: fa-wa-llaḡī nafs Ḥadīḡah bi-yadi-hī innī la-arḡū an takūna nabī hādīhi l-ummah

Ḥadīḡah: So, by Him in whose hand rests the soul of Ḥadīḡah, I expect that you will become the prophet of this community

Waraqah: wa-llaḡī nafs Waraqah bi-yadi-hī ... inna-hū la-nabī hādīhi l-ummah

Waraqah: By Him in whose hand rests the soul of Waraqah, he surely is the prophet of this community

Waraqah: wa-llaḡī nafsī bi-yadi-hī inna-ka la-nabī hādīhi l-ummah

Waraqah: By Him in whose hand my soul rests, you are the prophet of this community

fa-iḡā qaḡā rasūl Allāh ḡiwāra-hū ... kāna awwal mā yabda'u bi-hī ... al-ka'bah qabla an yadhūla bayta-hū fa-yaḡūfu bi-hā ... tumma yarḡī'u ilā bayti-hī

So when the Messenger of God had completed his period of seclusion the very first thing which he was in the habit of doing was (to go to) the Ka'bah,

before he even entered his own home, to circumambulate it and then to return to his own home

fa-lammā qaḏā rasūl Allāh ḡiwāra-hū ... bada'a bi-l-ka'bah fa-ṭāfa bi-hā

So when the Messenger of God had completed his period of seclusion, he began at the Ka'ba and circumambulated it

Ḥadīḡah's praise of her husband (expressed in parallel phrases) is less of a formula than an example of 'typical phraseology'²⁰⁹ we also find elsewhere.²¹⁰

Our findings fit in very well with the information that the underlying report was related by a *qāṣṣ* (preacher, narrator of edifying tales) in a public gathering. The story is, as it were, more *qiṣṣah* than *ḥadīṭ*. Az-Zuhrī's tendency to confine himself to the essentials makes his report more of a *ḥadīṭ*.²¹¹

In spite of their different narrative character and specific divergences on some of the details, the two recensions share a number of important features. Most of all, the motifs combined in the conglomerates are generally the same and are even similarly arranged. This applies especially to LV I and LV III.

- LV I: Dream visions—*taḥannuṭ*—appearance of the angel—*iqra'*—Ḥadīḡah I and II—Waraqah—plan to commit suicide + *ufuq* (= *fatrah*);
- LV III: —*taḥannuṭ*—appearance of the angel—*iqra'*—plan to commit suicide + *ufuq*—Ḥadīḡah II (comfort and praise) —Waraqah.

In LV II, the sequence departs substantially from the model above:

- LV II: Dream visions—*taḥannuṭ*—Ḥadīḡah I (*zammilū-nī*)—plan to commit suicide—*iqra'*—Ḥadīḡah II (comfort and praise) – Waraqah.

Even (almost) verbatim parallels are not uncommon. In two prominent places, LV II and LV III have the same wording as opposed to LV I. In both texts, Muḥammad's reply to the request of the angel is:

mā (dā) aqra'u

What am I to recite?

compared to

mā anā bi-qāri'

I am not one to recite

in LV I. Moreover, LV II and LV III agree better in the formulation Muḥammad uses to express his intention to kill himself. We read:

an aṭraḡa nafsī min ḡaliq min ḡabal (LV II),

that I might cast myself from the top of a mountain

which is similar to

la-a'midanna ilā ḥālīq min al-ğabal fa-l-aṭraḥanna nafsī min-hu (LV III).

I shall make for the top of a mountain and shall cast myself from it.

Compare this to

kay yataraddā min ru'ūs šawāhiq al-ğibāl (LV I)

in order that he might fall from the peaks of lofty mountains.

It is also remarkable that in LV II and LV III, the angel is either from the very start identified as Gabriel (LV III) or introduces himself as Gabriel after a short while (LV II). In LV I, he remains anonymous and is only identified in the *fatrah* annex.²¹²

Considering the similarities and parallels discussed above, Sprenger's insight that, in spite of their different *isnāds*, the Ibn Ishāq recension of the *iqra'* narration (LV III) and the az-Zuhrī < 'Urwah recension (LV I/II) have come from a common source,²¹³ is perfectly plausible. Not surprisingly, Nöldeke/Schwally agreed with Sprenger,²¹⁴ Sellheim simply takes the identity of the two *ḥadīṭs* for granted and Juynboll regards az-Zuhrī's tradition as a 'reshaping' of the original 'Ubayd version. Sprenger's second assumption that LV III most likely has the 'correct' original informant ('Ubayd ibn 'Umar)²¹⁵ is also very suggestive and was, independently of Sprenger, also posited by Juynboll. The decisive argument in Sprenger's favour is that he is able to explain how LV I/II could have shifted to 'Ā'iṣah as the original informant without charging az-Zuhrī or 'Urwah with conscious forgery.

Sprenger maintains that an attribution for the tradition as extravagant as that made by Ibn Ishāq deserves to be trusted.²¹⁶ (In fact, forgers preferred to produce 'smooth', innocuous *isnāds*!) Secondly, he assumes that Wahb, who must have been very young at the time the story was related by 'Ubayd, could only have received it indirectly from 'Ubayd, but directly from his patron 'Urwah, in whose family the story was originally narrated (and doubtlessly passed on). It would still be inappropriate to accuse Wahb of fraud, because

- 1 in his time, transmitters were not obliged to provide a complete *isnād*, and links could be omitted;
- 2 he could very well have remembered that 'Ubayd recited the story in his (scil. Wahb's) early youth.

But according to Sprenger, Wahb's version draws on 'Urwah's formulation.²¹⁷ In my opinion, we should not insist so much on 'Urwah as Wahb's original informant (as Sprenger has done) but, more generally, envisage a Zubayrid 'family tradition' as the source on which both of them could have drawn.

However, az-Zuhrī states that 'Urwah transmits on the authority of 'Ā'iṣah. As we have seen, this attribution is missing in Hišām ibn 'Urwah's tradition (SV III)

and in one of the two versions from Ibn Lahī'ah < Abū l-Aswad (LV IV). Sprenger believes that, as in the previous case, 'Urwah's story in its extant form did not originate with 'Ā'iṣah just as Wahb's did not (immediately) come from 'Ubayd. However, 'Urwah could have remembered that 'Ā'iṣah had talked about the incident (although it took place long before her birth).²¹⁸ He might therefore have felt justified in naming her as his informant.²¹⁹ So much for Sprenger. More probable, I assume, would be the following: 'Urwah did not name a source for the tradition he passed on to az-Zuhrī (something we observe quite frequently with him); later, az-Zuhrī, convinced that, as with so much of 'Urwah's material, the tradition originated from 'Ā'iṣah, added her name to the *isnād* – incorrectly, but without any intention to deceive his audience.²²⁰

Sprenger also argued that 'Urwah's actual source was probably a tale by 'Ubayd narrated at the court of his brother 'Abdallāh. His assumption would remain true even if 'Urwah did not receive this tale, as Sprenger believes, directly from 'Ubayd, but, as I assume, only later and indirectly via a member (or members) of the Zubayrid family.

On the basis of these considerations, we can establish the following:

- LV I/II and LV III draw on the same source.
- The underlying report they are based on was already assembled in this particular compound form (the 'conglomerate' we find in the Zuhrī and very similar Ibn Ishāq recensions) in the first century AH by 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr.
- From the Zubayrid family, where it was recited by 'Ubayd, it was passed on to both 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (and from there to his son Hišām and his master student az-Zuhrī, etc.) and Wahb ibn Kaysān (from whom Ibn Ishāq received it).

Following this hypothesis, the reconstructed transmission lines would be as in Figure 2.3.

2.5 The 'purged' 'Urwah recension

Keeping in mind that the Hišām ibn 'Urwah recension (SV III and the two related traditions) is fragmentary, that the Ibn Ishāq recension (LV III) preserves numerous traits of the *qiṣṣah* (tale of a popular narrator) and, finally, that the Ibn Lahī'ah recension (LV IV) was conspicuously reworked in transmission (transforming the 'eerie encounter' into an 'intimate meeting'), we can assume that az-Zuhrī's version is closest to 'Urwah's. This also extends to his choice of diction: 'Urwah, who cultivated a sober style,²²¹ had probably already purged the story of its *qiṣṣah* elements. Wahb ibn Kaysān, on the other hand, apparently retained these elements or even expanded them.²²²

Still, we have to allow for the possibility that az-Zuhrī also introduced modifications, mostly on redactional grounds. A glance at the two different versions transmitted on his authority gives us sufficient cause for suspicion. Similarities between the respective passages in the two other transmissions (LV IV, also LV

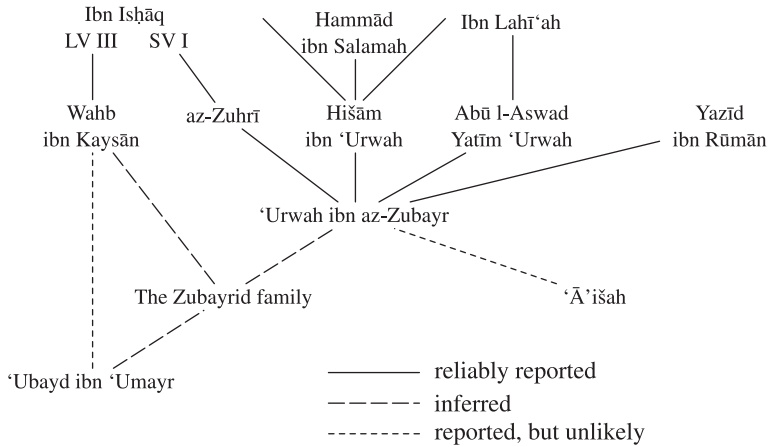


Figure 2.3 The 'Urwah recension of the *iqra'* narration

III) demonstrate that the *ufuq* motif was elaborated in more detail in 'Urwah's text than in az-Zuhrī. (Az-Zuhrī makes up for this apparent omission by presenting the full motif in the *fatrah* annex added later.) Most certainly, az-Zuhrī toned down the madness (or *kāhin*) motif. It must have appeared in full in 'Urwah's text, as we can see from its parallel appearance in versions of Hišām ibn 'Urwah (SV III) and 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr (LV III); the only conceivable direction would lead from the more graphic to the more innocuous form, not vice versa. It is unclear whether 'Urwah included the *zammilū-nī* motif in the Ḥadīḡah narration: it is only preserved by az-Zuhrī and does not occur in the two other transmissions (LV III and LV IV).

It is likely that 'Urwah (and not az-Zuhrī) had already described the revelation of *sūrah* 96: 1–5 as taking place while Muḡammad was awake, because this detail also occurs in Ibn Lahī'ah (LV IV and SV IV). Possibly, 'Urwah retained mention of the cloth used by the angel to strangle the Prophet: through a process of reinterpretation, this motif could have become the motif of the carpet the angel sits Muḡammad down on in one of the Ibn Lahī'ah versions. This motif shift might very well have been the reason for the alteration of the nature of the whole scene, away from an eerie encounter to an intimate meeting. We at least notice that the shift of motif is closely connected with the change of atmosphere.

We cannot safely reconstruct the exact sequence of motifs in 'Urwah's version, e.g. whether the *iqra'* motif preceded the *ufuq* motif (the order also differs in the two Zuhrī versions!). In cases such as this, we always have to take into account that early historians and transmitters did not always follow the same procedure or sequence every time they recited their material.

Bearing all these considerations in mind, we can at least identify the following motifs as part of 'Urwah's lectures on the first revelation experience:

Muḥammad's dream visions—the *taḥannuṭ* narration—the *ufuq* narration (aural and visual apparitions: the angel on the horizon, who greets Muḥammad as prophet)—the Ḥadiḡah narration (Muḥammad's fear of being possessed or a *kāhin*)—his suicide plan—comfort and praise from Ḥadiḡah)—the *iqra'* narration (the revelation, probably while awake—repeated request by the angel to recite—repeatedly, Muḥammad declines—he is pressed by the angel—finally, the revelation takes place)—the Waraqah narration.

The *iqra'* narration could also have preceded the *ufuq* narration. In that case (as in LV III), the *ufuq* motif (and not the Ḥadiḡah motif) would have served to prevent Muḥammad from committing suicide.

On the basis of two or more parallel versions in the different transmissions, we can postulate a few sections of 'direct' speech for the original 'Urwah version.

In 'Urwah's tradition, Muḥammad replies after the angel's request to recite (*iqra'*): *mā aqra'u* (I do not recite/what shall I recite?) as in LV II and LV III, and not *mā anā bi-qāri'* as in LV I. (The answer *kayfa aqra'u*, how am I to recite?, found in LV IV and SV IV is certainly not original, but is easier to explain on the basis of *mā aqra'u* than *mā anā bi-qāri'* (I am not one to recite)!) Further, Muḥammad says about his idea to kill himself either:

la-a'midanna ilā ḥāliq min al-ḡabal fa-l-aṭraḡanna nafsī min-hu

I shall make for the top of a mountain and shall cast myself from it (LV III)

or

aṭraḡu nafsī min ḥāliq min ḡabal

I shall cast myself from the top of a mountain) (LV II)

or something similar to this.

Ḥadiḡah's reaction to Muḥammad's report about his angelic vision is:

inna llāh lā yaf'alu bi-ka ḡālika (God would not treat you in this manner) (SV III)

or

mā kāna llāh li-yaf'ala bi-ka ḡālika (God is not one to treat you in this manner) (LV III)

or

abšir fa-wa-llāh lā yaf'alu llāh bi-ka illā ḡayran (Look, by God, God would not treat you in any way but well [a good one]) (LV IV).

Finally, ‘Urwah had already transmitted Ḥadīḡah’s praise (in parallel phrases)²²³ which agrees in four versions (LV I, LV II, SV III, LV III):

inna-ka la-taṣīlu r-riḡm wa-taṣduqu l-ḡadīḡ wa-taqrī ḡ-ḡayf wa-tu’īnu ‘alā nawā’ib al-ḡaaq

For you bind tightly the ties of relationship, you speak truthfully, you shelter the guest and you help in cases of recurring obligations.²²⁴ (LV I/II, version of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq)

inna-ka taṣduqu l-ḡadīḡ wa-tu’addī l-amānah wa-taṣīlu r-riḡm

You speak truthfully, you deliver that which is committed to your trust (scil. to its owners) and you bind tightly the ties of relationship (by kind behaviour to your relatives (SV III).

min ṣīdq ḡadīḡi-ka wa-‘uzm amānati-ka wa-ḡusn ḡulqi-ka wa-ṣilat riḡmi-ka

For the truthfulness of your speech, the might of your trust, the fineness of your character and the tautness of your ties of relationship (LV III).

2.6 The Zuhrī recension again: The two versions

After our hypothetical reconstruction of ‘Urwah’s text, we can now ask how the two substantially different versions of az-Zuhrī might have emerged. We have to remember that apparently they both were consciously reworked versions: their differences did not arise accidentally out of the transmission process. We will not be able to reach definitive conclusions, but we can at least establish two hypothetical explanations.

Before tackling the overall divergence between the texts, we will turn to one particular problem: how did the text shift from the (ambiguous) phrase *mā aqra’u* (‘I do not recite/what shall I recite?’) in LV II to the (unequivocal) formulation *mā anā bi-ḡāri’* (‘I am not one to recite’) in LV I (theoretically, the reverse development would have been possible as well)? This question can be answered with some certainty;²²⁵ in any case, we have textual evidence on this issue and do not have to rely solely on speculation.

In accordance with the results of the previous discussion, the following explanation presupposes that *mā aqra’u* is the original form of Muḡammad’s reaction to the request of the angel, transmitted by az-Zuhrī on the authority of ‘Urwah. There is another (late) version of ‘Uqayl’s transmission of the Zuhrī recension (appearing only in al-Bayḡaḡī).²²⁶ In it, az-Zuhrī replaced the customary beginning of the tradition according to ‘Urwah with a different initial passage, which he reports on the authority of another teacher, Muḡammad ibn an-Nu’mān.²²⁷ The literal translation reads as follows:

(al-Layḡ < ‘Uqayl < az-Zuhrī:) Muḡammad ibn an-Nu’mān ibn Baṣīr al-Anṣārī, who lived in Damascus, reported to him [scil. az-Zuhrī] that the angel came to the messenger of God and said: ‘Recite!’ He [scil. the Prophet] said:

‘I then replied: “I am not one to recite” (*mā anā bi-qāri*’). The angel did the same with me again, then released me and said: ‘Recite!’ I replied: ‘I am not one to recite.’ The angel did the same with me again, then released me and said: ‘Recite in the name of your Lord ...’ (*sūrah* 96: 1–2)” – Muḥammad ibn Nu‘mān said: ‘Thereupon, the messenger of God returned with it [scil. his report of the events].’ – Ibn Šihāb az-Zuhrī said: ‘I heard ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr say that ‘Ā’iṣah, the Prophet’s wife, said: “He then returned to Ḥadiḡah etc”.’ (There follows the rest of the tradition as transmitted by az-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’iṣah).

Should this – admittedly late – tradition be authentic, then az-Zuhrī would, in addition to ‘Urwah, have had a second source for his report of the revelation experience (or a part of it): Muḥammad ibn Nu‘mān. The latter would have transmitted Muḥammad’s reaction to the request of the angel as *mā anā bi-qāri*’ (I am not one who will/is able to recite). It is definitely possible that az-Zuhrī, while redacting LV I, replaced ‘Urwah’s phrase *mā aqra’u* as it appears in (the older) LV II with *mā anā bi-qāri*’ under the influence of Muḥammad ibn an-Nu‘mān.

This interpretation of events would also explain the hybrid version preserved by al-Azraqī:²²⁸ he transmits the Zuhrī tradition in Ma‘mar’s version, but on the authority of one of Ma‘mar’s students other than ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, ‘Abdallāh ibn Mu‘āḍ aṣ-Šan‘ānī (d. 181/797–8).²²⁹ In his version, Muḥammad answers the angel’s request twice with *mā anā bi-qāri*’ and the third time with *mā aqra’u*.²³⁰ Perhaps for a time, az-Zuhrī (and, on his authority, Ma‘mar) recited a harmonizing version joining the two different replies he received from ‘Urwah and Muḥammad ibn an-Nu‘mān. Still unexplained, however, is the puzzling fact that in most of his lectures, az-Zuhrī only mentioned ‘Urwah and not – together with him – Muḥammad ibn an-Nu‘mān as his source for LV I (and the ‘harmonizing’ version).

This is an attempt to account for one element of the wider issue. We will now return to our main question: how can we explain the different character of the two Zuhrī versions?

Our first attempt assumes that LV I is the older version and the only one az-Zuhrī passed on. Possible evidence for this scenario would be its almost verbatim transmission by several independent transmitters (Ma‘mar, ‘Uqayl, Yūnus). Therefore, variations in LV II preserved by aṭ-Ṭabarī would have been introduced by one of the transmitters between az-Zuhrī and aṭ-Ṭabarī or by the latter himself. The redactor and compiler aṭ-Ṭabarī, however, would hardly have been responsible for the reworking: as we have seen in the case of LV III, he presents his material in a very exact and faithful manner. A more likely candidate would be az-Zuhrī’s student an-Nu‘mān ibn Rāšid.²³¹ Muslim *ḥadīṭ* criticism judged him harshly: according to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, he transmitted *manākir* (objectionable material). Ibn ‘Adī, on the other hand, states that he possessed ‘a notebook (with material) on the authority of az-Zuhrī’ (*nushah ‘an az-Zuhrī*), which was said to be correct. Thus, an-Nu‘mān could have been behind the modifications. But interventions by later transmitters cannot be categorically excluded.

This hypothesis does not provide a good explanation of obviously older, original motifs in LV II, i.e. motifs agreeing with LV III, especially Muḥammad's answer in the form *mā aqra' u*. One could only assume that the redactor of LV II knew LV III or a related text and recast his Zuhrī version in accordance with it.

The second explanation assumes that the two different versions (LV I and LV II) indeed originated in *this* form (roughly) with az-Zuhrī, i.e. they were neither the work of 'Urwah nor a transmitter after az-Zuhrī. According to this hypothesis, LV II was az-Zuhrī's older version. He did not substantially alter 'Urwah's material, but restructured it and cast it in a different, better shape. The central motifs, albeit partly split (the Ḥadīḡah motif) or reduced (the *ufuq* motif), were rearranged into a narratively clever and psychologically plausible sequence:

First call of the angel ('O Muḥammad, you are the messenger of God')—Muḥammad's fear and escape to Ḥadīḡah, culminating in his exclamation 'Wrap me up!' (*zammilū-nī*) (Ḥadīḡah I motif)—his fear subsides—second call of the angel—suicide plan—appearance of the angel who now identifies himself as Gabriel and addresses Muḥammad again as messenger of God (substantially reduced *ufuq* motif)—revelation of *sūrah* 96: 1–5 (including assault scene) (*iqra'* motif)—second escape of Muḥammad to Ḥadīḡah (Ḥadīḡah II motif) etc.

Two incremental developments drive the narrative: Muḥammad's ever more intense reactions to the two aural apparitions (after the first: escape to Ḥadīḡah; after the second: intention to kill himself) and the progression from the two aural apparitions to the angelic vision with the revelation on the third occasion.

Az-Zuhrī reports in this version that Muḥammad exclaims *zammilū-nī* ('wrap me up!') at Ḥadīḡah's place after the first aural apparition. It is not clear whether this motif is derived from 'Urwah's version or added by az-Zuhrī (perhaps based on another source), since it is not part of the other 'Urwah version (including the Ibn Ishāq < Wahb recension, LV III). What is clear, however, is that az-Zuhrī unwittingly abetted another revelation scenario which contradicted his own account. In his days, traditionists were most decidedly not in agreement as to what was the first portion of the Qur'ān revealed to the Prophet. A number of scholars identified Qur'ānic passages other than *sūrah* 96: 1–5; according to one widespread opinion, *sūrah* 74 with its initial verse *yā ayyuhā l-muddatīr* ('You who wrap yourself up')²³² was the first revelation.²³³ Apparently in conscious opposition to az-Zuhrī, this view was supported by his contemporary Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kaṭīr (d. 129/746–7 or slightly later).²³⁴

The *ḥadīṡ*²³⁵ quoted in its defence has the following *isnād*: n.n. < Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kaṭīr < (Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Qārīz az-Zuhrī)²³⁶ < Abū Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. 94/712–13 or ten years later)²³⁷ < Ḡābir ibn 'Abdallāh (d. 73/692–3 or later;²³⁸ he invokes the Prophet himself as his source). It explicitly stresses the chronological priority of *sūrah* 74 over *sūrah* 96 and combines the *taḥannuṡ* (only briefly alluded to), *ufuq* and Ḥadīḡah narrations. In detail, the sequence is as follows: aural apparition (hearing a call) and vision (Muḥammad

sees an angel on the horizon, which in this text is sitting on a throne)—Muḥammad’s escape to Ḥadīḡah, his exclamation, ‘Wrap me up!’ (*dattirū-nī*)—revelation of *sūrah* 74.

Juynboll assumes²³⁹ that az-Zuhrī, in an attempt to counter Yaḥyā’s ‘attack’, spread a tradition adapted to the opposing tradition with the same *isnād*²⁴⁰ which suggests that Yaḥyā’s *ḥadīṭ* was correct, but describes events occurring *after* the *fatrah* (temporary suspension of the revelation). He calls it az-Zuhrī’s ‘*fatrah* trick’. Az-Zuhrī accommodates Yaḥyā’s ‘theory’ to a certain degree by admitting that *sūrah* 74 in a sense is a ‘first’ revelation, but only the first revelation after the *fatrah*, not *the* first revelation of them all. So much for Juynboll, who we can largely follow on this matter.²⁴¹

It is very well possible that az-Zuhrī reworked his original version of the tradition according to ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’iṣah after Yaḥyā’s attack and adjusted it to the newly introduced *fatrah* motif. This, in my opinion, is one possible reason for the differences between the two Zuhrī versions of the tradition.

At the end of the presumably earlier version LV II, az-Zuhrī still quotes the Prophet to the effect that the next revelation after *sūrah* 96 was 68, followed by 74. A *fatrah* (temporary suspension of the revelation) is not yet mentioned. In contrast, three transmissions (by Ma‘mar, Yūnus, ‘Uqayl) of the second version of our tradition (LV I) invariably contain an adjunct of varying length, which always begins with ‘Then, revelation was temporarily suspended’, *wa-fatara l-waḥy*²⁴² (*fatrah* annex). Yet, adding the annex was not enough. To support his position regarding the primacy of *sūrah* 96, az-Zuhrī had to change the structure and sequence of motifs of his first, ‘psychologizing’ version. Most importantly, he had to shift the positioning of *one* motif, Muḥammad’s flight to Ḥadīḡah (taking place prior to the revelation of *sūrah* 96), to another place in the story. Since this motif culminated with Muḥammad’s exclamation *zammilū-nī*, it would have led people to expect a revelation beginning with *yā ayyuhā l-muzzammil/muddattī*²⁴³ (*sūrah* 73 or 74). This section was now placed *after* the revelation experience (the exclamation might have been intended to prepare the next revelation after the *fatrah*). In addition, az-Zuhrī moved Muḥammad’s desperation and suicide plan to the time of the *fatrah* (perhaps to provide a convincing reason for the next appearance of the angel).

Should this explanation be correct, LV II would have been az-Zuhrī’s older and LV I his later version, adjusted to accommodate the *fatrah* trick. The higher degree of similarity between the wording of the (possibly earlier) version LV II and the Ibn Ishāq < Wahb (< ‘Urwah) version LV III as compared to the ‘purged’ (possibly later) version LV I²⁴⁴ also suggests that this explanation is valid.

2.7 The probable archetype: The narration of the *qāṣṣ* ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr

‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr’s (d. 68/687–8) narration is at the root of Wahb’s and probably also ‘Urwah’s version. We can establish the following at least highly probable assumptions:

- 1 In his story, 'Ubayd explicitly singled out or at least implied *sūrah* 96: 1–5 as the initial revelation. This is confirmed by an *awā'il* tradition independent of our tradition, which was transmitted by Ibn Abī Šaybah,²⁴⁵ al-Balāḍurī,²⁴⁶ Ibn Sa'īd²⁴⁷ and aṭ-Ṭabarī²⁴⁸ with the *isnād* n.n. < Šu'bah ibn al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ (d. 160/776)²⁴⁹ < 'Amr ibn Dīnār (d. 125/742–3 or a year later)²⁵⁰ < 'Ubayd. In his *Tafsīr*,²⁵¹ 'Abd ar-Razzāq has the *isnād* Ibn 'Uyaynah < 'Amr ibn Dīnār < 'Ubayd.
- 2 'Ubayd's story was already a long version, i.e. an elaborately composed 'conglomerate', since it would have been expected from a popular narrator to entertain and edify his audience with a long, well structured and exciting tale.
- 3 The *qiṣṣah* elements of the story preserved in the Ibn Ishāq < Wahb recension (which are, except for small remnants, missing in az-Zuhrī's text; they were probably already reduced by 'Urwah) were drawn from the story delivered by the *qāṣṣ* 'Ubayd.

Did the 'popular narrator' 'Ubayd invent the story? Hardly – if the information Ibn Ishāq gives about its presentation at the court of 'Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr is correct,²⁵² 'Ubayd related it 'in front of people who were familiar with the events. He would have been able to embellish the truth (or whatever 'Abdallāh and his circle regarded as the truth), but he could not substantially deviate from it.'²⁵³

2.8 Other variants of the *iqra'* narration

As Sprenger had already pointed out²⁵⁴ and as Juynboll and Rubin have demonstrated again more recently,²⁵⁵ there were other transmitters who, at around the same time 'Ubayd disseminated the story, spread parts or variations of the narration. However, the high degree of resemblance in motifs and motif sequence we find in the traditions according to az-Zuhrī < 'Urwah on the one hand and Ibn Ishāq < Wahb < 'Ubayd on the other is unique.

There is for example one tradition in multiple transmissions²⁵⁸ which is traced back to the original informant 'Abdallāh ibn Šaddād (d. 81/700).²⁵⁷ Common link of the respective *isnāds* is Abū Ishāq Sulaymān aš-Šaybānī (d. 129/746–7 or later),²⁵⁸ a contemporary of az-Zuhrī. Similar to the versions ultimately derived from 'Ubayd,²⁵⁹ but in a much shorter form,²⁶⁰ the tradition relates the story from Gabriel's appearance until Waraqah's prophecy. Juynboll believes that 'Abdallāh ibn Šaddād formulated his tradition following 'Ubayd (but without quoting him as his source).²⁶¹ Rubin, on the other hand, maintains on the basis of the contents of the tradition that 'Abdallāh ibn Šaddād's version is older.²⁶²

A further similar, but even shorter variant appears in Ibn Ḥaḡar's Buḡārī commentary.²⁶³ It allegedly formed part of the *Sīrah* composed by Ibn Ishāq's contemporary Abū l-Mu'tamir Sulaymān ibn Ṭarḡān at-Taymī (d. 143/760)²⁶⁴ and reads as follows:

(Muḡammad ibn 'Abd al-A'lā [d. 245/859–60]²⁶⁵ < Mu'tamir ibn Sulaymān [d. 187/803 or 804]²⁶⁶ < Sulaymān at-Taymī:) Gabriel came to the Prophet on Mount Ḥirā' and made him recite: 'Recite in the name of your Lord!' He

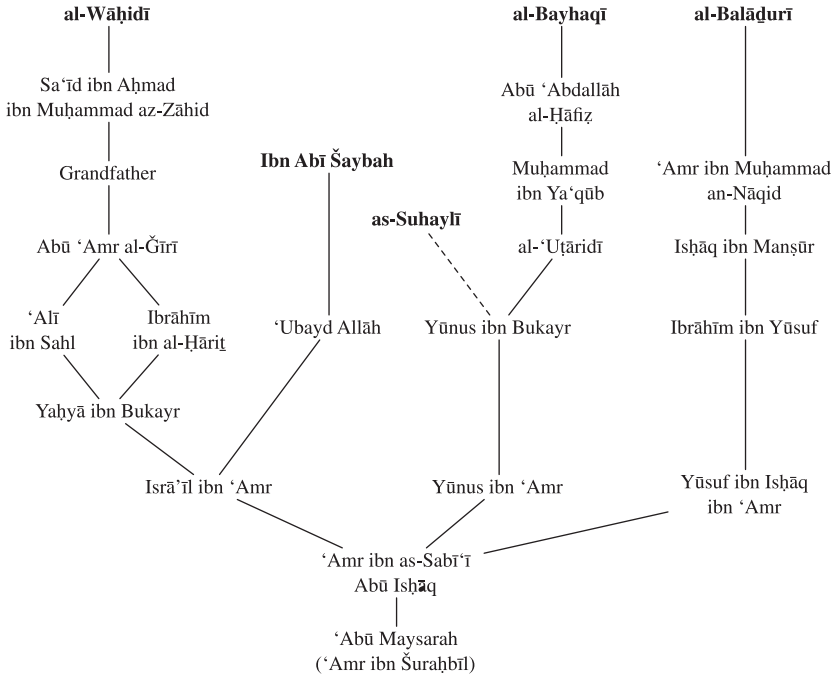


Figure 2.4 The *ḥadīṭ* according to Abū Maysarah

[scil. Muḥammad] went away and remained uncertain. He [scil. Gabriel] then approached him head-on in his shape. Then, he [scil. the Prophet] beheld a tremendous spectacle.

We will insert here a description of a further tradition, again a conglomerate, which deals with the subject of Muḥammad's first revelation experience.²⁶⁷ It differs somewhat from the other traditions studied so far: it lacks the *iqra'* narration. We will nevertheless analyse this text because the conglomerate displays, in spite of the missing *iqra'* narration, surprising similarities in motifs and wording to the conglomerates ultimately originating with 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr or 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr.

As we can see in Figure 2.4, the common link (CL) of this (frequently quoted) tradition is the Kūfan Abū Ishāq 'Amr ibn 'Abdallāh as-Sabī'ī (d. 127/745),²⁶⁸ a contemporary of az-Zuhrī and Wahb. He reports on the authority of Abū Maysarah 'Amr ibn Šuraḥbīl,²⁶⁹ a contemporary of 'Ubayd. As-Sabī'ī must have transmitted the tradition from memory and mainly in his family; the versions of his two sons and his grandson differ substantially in wording while preserving the same meaning (*riwāyah bi-l-mā'nā*). Thus, the tradition received a stable form only a generation *after* the CL or even later.²⁷⁰

Almost identical in wording are the two sub-versions originating from Isrāʿīl ibn ʿAmr we find in Ibn Abī Šaybah and al-Wāḥidī; the latter, however, substantially shortens the tradition. Practically identical in both wording and text stock are the two versions derived from Yūnus ibn Bukayr, a transmitter living *two* generations after the CL (as-Sabīʿī). They were preserved by al-ʿUṭāridī and as-Suhaylī.

The main difference between this *ḥadīth* on the one hand and the previously discussed *ḥadīths* (on the authority of az-Zuhrī < ʿUrwah and Ibn Ishāq < Wahb < ʿUbayd) on the other is the occasion and character of the first revelation. The starting point of the revelation experience is not the ‘assault’ of the angel in the cave on Mount Ḥirāʾ, but an aural apparition (an angelic voice calling Muḥammad when he is alone, without any vision), i.e. in a way, a reduced *uḥūq* narration. Even more importantly, the first revelation is not *sūrah* 96: 1–5, but the Qurʾān’s first *sūrah*, the *Fātiḥah*. Accordingly, the angel does not request Muḥammad to recite (*iqra*), he merely says *qul*, ‘speak’. In addition, Muḥammad visits Warāqah in the company of Abū Bakr (not his wife Ḥadīḡah) and the revelation experience proper is situated between this and a second visit to Warāqah.

Apart from these differences, we notice striking resemblances in the motifs and formulations of the respective texts (we even find verbatim parallels!). After the aural apparition, Muḥammad tells Ḥadīḡah that he thinks he is going insane. She replies:

mā kāna llāh li-yafʿala bi-ka ḍālika

God is not one to treat you in this manner.

There are remarkable similarities in wording especially compared to the Ibn Ishāq version.²⁷¹ The remark above is followed by Ḥadīḡah’s praise of her husband, expressed in parallel phrases:

tašduqu l-ḥadīth wa-tuʿaddī l-amānah wa-tašilu r-riḥm

You speak truthfully, you deliver that which is committed to your trust [scil. to its owners] and you bind tightly the ties of relationship (by kind behaviour to your relatives)

They are in part identical to the parallel passages in the recensions of az-Zuhrī and Hišām ibn ʿUrwah. Warāqah tells Muḥammad that the Nāmūs of Moses has come to him (Jesus is also mentioned), predicts the rejection and enmity he will suffer from his fellow countrymen and expresses his desire to live long enough to assist him in his struggle – similar to what we read in the other versions known to us.

2.9 The basic components of the traditions about the first revelation

Apparently, by the second half of the first century, a set of fixed motifs were already in existence which could be combined with different versions of the

‘story about Muḥammad’s first revelation experience’. Accounts identifying *sūrah* 96: 1–5 as the initial revelation are usually linked with the *iqra*’ narration (the story of the angel requesting or forcing Muḥammad to recite, set in a cave atop Mount Ḥirā’); whenever *sūrah* 74 is the first revelation, it is linked with the *ufuq* narration (the story of the appearance of the angel on the horizon). Other set motifs could be injected into the narrative, e.g. the *taḥannuṭ* motif and/or the Waraqah narration into the account centred around *sūrah* 96 as the initial divine message. The *ufuq* narrative, however, could also be combined with the *iqra*’ narrative and thus linked to *sūrah* 96. Finally, we also find a combination of motifs normally characteristic for an account involving *sūrah* 96 as the first revelation which is linked to *sūrah* 1 as the initial divine message. These motifs could (to a large extent) be freely assembled and applied to the first revelation experience in different configurations and degrees of elaboration and length.

In his study of the early *futuḥ* traditions, Noth made similar observations. He writes: ‘One composed traditions by combining more or less independent narrative motifs, which were integral parts of the *futuḥ* tradition, to a whole [in the manner of a mosaic]’²⁷² and also notes a ‘collage-like combination of heterogeneous tradition material’. According to Noth, the concept of history of the transmitters reflected in their approach²⁷³ ‘aimed less at a flawlessly accurate account of events than delivering attractive and memorable images’ – a very apt description indeed for the procedures followed by early transmitters in composing their versions of the Prophet’s first revelation experience!

‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr combined a considerable collection of motifs (the *taḥannuṭ*, Ḥadiḡah, *iqra*’, *ufuq* and Waraqah narrations) which circulated at the time, customarily associated with the beginnings of revelation and regarded to be true. The result was a coherent, edifying and entertaining story. Additionally, as a *qāṣṣ*, he probably embellished and extended certain elements. Subsequently, this story, which he also related in the Zubayrid family circle, was spread by members of this family as a ‘family tradition’. In some cases, its specific composition was preserved comparatively well in transmission (e.g. as transmitted by ‘Urwah > az-Zuhrī and Wahb > Ibn Ishāq; also to a certain degree by ‘Urwah > Abū l-Aswad > Ibn Lahī‘ah); in others, it was heavily abridged (in ‘Urwah > Hišām ibn ‘Urwah) or reduced to an *awā’il* tradition or even dismantled and some of its elements recombined with other motifs (in ‘Urwah > Yazīd ibn Rūmān).²⁷⁴

Other (contemporary or later) transmitters described the circumstances and occasion of the revelation of *sūrah* 96 similarly and occasionally employed the same motifs. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether they drew on the same sources independently or depended on (i.e. imitated) each other, since the only material we have for comparison are variously modified transmissions, not the original versions. There is no need for us to offer a definite account of the dependencies between the texts; we do not have to side with either Juynboll, who claims that ‘Abdallāh ibn Šaddād merely imitated ‘Ubayd’s story,²⁷⁵ or Rubin, who regards the version of the former as the more original text on the basis of its contents.²⁷⁶ We have to keep in mind, however, that independent composition becomes less likely with the growing length of shared motif sequences and a

higher degree of similarity in the elaboration of the motifs.²⁷⁷ Thus, we can be sure that the Zuhri < 'Urwah and Ibn Ishāq < Wahb recensions were *not* composed independently of each other. What we wanted to demonstrate was that their probable shared source was 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr's account presented at the Zubayrid court.

2.10 A factual core of the traditions about the experience of the first revelation?

Do the traditions about the first revelation experience contain a factual core? We at least cannot exclude that Muḥammad talked about the beginnings of revelation in his Medinese period and that his account – or parts or motifs of it – became the basis for later stories or legends. Some scholars took that position;²⁷⁸ von Stülpnagel even considered it possible 'that 'Urwah's (purged) text ... reproduces the version of the first revelation Muḥammad himself deemed best in his Medinese period'.²⁷⁹ In accordance with Lammens' theory,²⁸⁰ other scholars maintain that the *iqra* ' narration grew out of an interpretation of the first verses of *sūrah* 96 (as much as the *ufuq* narration allegedly developed out of an interpretation of *sūrah* 53, especially verses 6–10, and *sūrah* 81: 23).²⁸¹

At this point, we can proceed no further. In terms of the study of oral tradition, the transmission-historical situation which has emerged from our analyses has to be described as follows: even the oldest, more or less safely identifiable informants for the story ('Ubayd ibn 'Umayr; even more so 'Abdallāh ibn Šaddād and Abū Maysarah)²⁸² received the account through *hearsay*, not from an immediate witness or a contemporary of the event. What they report are 'memories of memories' and therefore oral traditions.²⁸³ The events in question did not take place during their lifetime, but long before their birth. The claim that the Prophet himself reported his first revelation experience in this way and that he himself designated *sūrah* 96: 1–5 as the first revealed text is therefore nothing more than a *hypothesis*.²⁸⁴ There exist, and already existed in early Islam, other hypotheses on this issue.²⁸⁵

In Chapter 3, I will analyse a tradition for which the oldest safely identifiable informant recorded and passed on the report of a *contemporary* source, probably the affected person herself; hence, it constitutes 'oral history'.

2.11 Summary

The findings of this chapter largely concern transmission history. They are as follows:

- Stories about Muḥammad's 'first revelation experience' with a varied, but nevertheless restricted stock of fixed motifs (e.g. the *ufuq*, *iqra* ' and Waraqah narrations), which could be freely recombined, were already known and passed on in the second half of the first century AH. One version must have travelled to Europe already in the year 93/711 or slightly later and was reworked as part of a Christian legend in England in the first quarter of the second/eighth century.

- One of these stories disseminated in the first century AH formed part of the repertoire of a *qāṣṣ*. It was a conglomerate consisting of a particular combination of *taḥannuṭ*, *iqra'*, *ufuq*, Ḥadīḡah and Waraqah narrations and identified *sūrah* 96: 1–5 as the initial revelation.
- Representatives of the *first* generation of scholarly transmitters, 'Urwah in particular, took up the conglomerate and reshaped it stylistically, rendering the *qiṣṣah* into a *ḥadīṭ*.
- *After the first* generation of scholarly transmitters ('Urwah > Hišām ibn 'Urwah, 'Urwah > az-Zuhrī, etc.), the *ḥadīṭ* underwent substantial changes, e.g. variations in its wording (*riwāyah bi-l-ma'nā* was the predominant mode of transmission), structural modifications for redactional reasons (sometimes substantial abridgements, rearrangements, decomposition) and tendentious alterations (embellishment, palliation through reworking of motifs).
- *After the second* generation (az-Zuhrī > Ma'mar, az-Zuhrī > Ibn Ishāq, etc.), further, but less substantial changes took place. They mainly affected the wording or consisted of other, redactional modifications. These changes decreased over time: verbatim transmission of certain passages (*riwāyah bi-l-lafẓ*) can already be observed from az-Zuhrī onwards (but not for his contemporary as-Sabī'ī!). It becomes more frequent, but still not the rule, with the *third* generation (Ibn Ishāq > al-Bakkā'ī, Yūnus ibn Bukayr; Ma'mar > 'Abd ar-Razzāq) and is more or less generally followed starting with the *fourth* generation ('Abd ar-Razzāq, al-Bakkā'ī, Yūnus ibn Bukayr).
- Alterations did not come to an end even after the *fourth* generation (al-Bakkā'ī > Ibn Hišām), but they were generally confined to abridgements, which occasionally changed the meaning of the text (e.g. in Ibn Hišām).²⁸⁶

3 The issue of authenticity

The tradition of the slander against ‘Ā’iṣah (*ḥadīṭ al-ifk*)

Our second case study centres on the *ḥadīṭ al-ifk*, the tradition (better: tradition complex) about a slanderous allegation against ‘Ā’iṣah. This ‘scandal story’ was studied by Wansbrough in his *Sectarian Milieu*¹ and in Juynboll’s article ‘Early Islamic society’.² Spellberg devoted a chapter of her book *Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past*³ to the subject, approaching it from a gender studies perspective.⁴ The *ḥadīṭ* has also been treated by Buhl,⁵ Abbott,⁶ von Stülpnagel,⁷ Widengren⁸ and others. In the following discussion, I will deal explicitly with Wansbrough. As in the previous chapter, Juynboll’s method of *isnād* analysis has exerted a substantial influence on our procedure; in addition, we will concur with his general assessment of the tradition (its authentic core).

Wansbrough’s analysis is based on the three best known recensions of the tradition. With the help of the ‘form-critical method’ (developed in Old Testament studies),⁹ its concepts and terminological tools, he means to prove a particular hypothesis, namely that the texts illustrate the development from a loosely structured narration to a concise normative *exemplum*, from mythical to normative content, from *qiṣṣah* to *ḥadīṭ*. He posits Ibn Iṣḥāq’s (d. 150/767) recension as the basic form of the story. As its most developed form, he identifies al-Buḥārī’s (d. 256/870) text, which allegedly serves an exclusively (and expectedly) paradigmatic purpose. Between the two, he situates the version of al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), who refines Ibn Iṣḥāq’s text without giving it al-Buḥārī’s reductive character.¹⁰ For now, we will leave Wansbrough’s hypothesis aside and will return to it later.¹¹

3.1 The Zuhrī recension

The first step in our analysis of the tradition will once again be to compile as exhaustive a corpus of recensions and versions of the story as possible. We will arrange it according to *isnāds*, which accompany most of them. Among other things, it turns out that the Buḥārī version quoted by Wansbrough forms part of a very large group of texts which draw on the report of Ibn Šihāb az-Zuhrī (d. 124/742). According to al-Buḥārī’s commentator Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, a total of eighteen transmitters report it on the authority of az-Zuhrī.¹²

Thus, az-Zuhrī is the common link (CL) of the stemma (cf. Figure 3.1). For the moment, we can therefore assume that az-Zuhrī disseminated the story in this

form. Ibn Ishāq also reports the tradition on the authority of az-Zuhrī, but he claims to have mixed his material with the reports of two additional informants.¹³

First, we will turn to the unmixed versions transmitted only on the authority of az-Zuhrī.¹⁴ Its contents in this recension (according to the version of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq) are as follows:¹⁵

- 1 As is his custom, the Prophet has his wives draw lots among themselves before a raid. ‘Ā’iṣah’s lot wins: she is permitted to accompany the Prophet.
- 2 On its return, the army stops overnight near Medina. ‘Ā’iṣah walks off to relieve herself and loses her necklace. Searching for it takes some time, but she finds it at last. In the meantime, the army has left without her. The carriers did not notice that she was not in her palanquin.
- 3 ‘Ā’iṣah reasons that women at that time were very lightweight on account of their sparse diet.
- 4 She finds her necklace. A young straggler by the name of Ṣafwān ibn al-Mu‘aṭṭal discovers her, puts her on a camel and escorts her to the army.
- 5 (a) ‘Ā’iṣah is wrongfully accused in Medina for the incident; (b) ‘Abdallāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl is named as one of the slanderers.
- 6 Immediately after her return, ‘Ā’iṣah falls ill and thus remains ignorant of the scandal. Only Muḥammad’s unwonted indifference towards her arouses her suspicion.
- 7 During a nightly walk to relieve herself, she meets Umm Miṣṭaḥ, the mother of one of her accusers by the name of Miṣṭaḥ. Umm Miṣṭaḥ informs her about the scandal.
- 8 The Prophet allows his young wife to return to her parents’ home.
- 9 She discusses the scandal with her mother Umm Rūmān, who is already aware of the news, and spends the night and the following morning in tears.
- 10 Muḥammad consults with ‘Alī and Usāmah on what to do next. He questions a servant by the name of Barīrah about ‘Ā’iṣah; her report is entirely positive.
- 11 In a public speech (*ḥuṭbah*), the Prophet comments on the scandal.
- 12 Immediately afterwards, a conflict erupts between the Banū l-Aws whose leader and spokesman is Sa’d ibn Mu‘āḏ and the Banū l-Ḥazraḡ whose leader is Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah. The latter’s arguments are countered by Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr, another tribesman of the Banū l-Aws.
- 13 Muḥammad visits the griefstricken ‘Ā’iṣah, who still remains in her parents’ home, and asks her to repent. She defends herself and insists on her innocence.
- 14 Revelation of *sūrah* 24: 11ff., which establishes ‘Ā’iṣah’s innocence.
- 15 ‘Ā’iṣah’s father Abū Bakr threatens to withhold his future support from his relative and client Miṣṭaḥ, one of the accusers. Revelation of *sūrah* 24: 22. Abū Bakr retracts his threat.
- 16 ‘Ā’iṣah praises the Prophet’s wife Zaynab, sister of Ḥammah, one of her detractors. Unlike her sister, Zaynab has only good things to say of ‘Ā’iṣah.

The story occurs several times in different chapters of al-Buḥārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*,¹⁶ three times in full. Each of these versions credits a different transmitter of az-Zuhrī: in the *Kitāb aṣ-ṣahādāt*,¹⁷ the source is Fulayḥ ibn Sulaymān (d. 168/784);¹⁸ in the

Kitāb at-tafsīr,¹⁹ it is Yūnus ibn Yazīd (d. 159/775);²⁰ and in the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*,²¹ it is Šālīḥ ibn Kaysān (d. after 140/757–8).²² The oldest extant work to contain a version of the story derived from az-Zuhrī is, according to my knowledge, the *Muṣannaḡ* of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq ibn Hammām aṣ-Šan‘ānī (d. 211/827), who transmits on the authority of his teacher Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid (d. 154/770) < az-Zuhrī.²³ One of the many scholars to quote the ‘Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma‘mar version is Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) in his *Musnad*.²⁴ In their *Tafsīrs*, aṭ-Ṭabarī²⁵ and an-Nasā’ī²⁶ include versions which are also transmitted from Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī, but traced not via ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, but another of Ma‘mar’s students, Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr (d. 190/805–6 or somewhat earlier).²⁷ The story also appears in Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*;²⁸ he merges Ma‘mar’s version with another version (reported according to Yūnus ibn Yazīd) and indicates at the end variants from two further versions (Fulayḥ ibn Sulaymān and Šālīḥ ibn Kaysān).²⁹

Altogether, the versions listed above are very similar (especially the Ma‘mar and Yūnus versions; this might have been why Muslim merged them). Motif stock and sequence are identical in each text. In addition, their wording is very similar, even identical at times. Nevertheless, we observe a small amount of amplifications (or additions),³⁰ deletions (or omissions), minor rearrangements and the occurrence of synonyms, etc. in some versions. Additions in particular sometimes give a version its very own flavour.³¹ Since so many transmitters have, independently of each other, reported the story on the authority of az-Zuhrī and since their versions display exactly the amount of differences to be expected on the basis of contemporary transmission methods,³² the most likely explanation is that az-Zuhrī passed on the tradition in the form we have extant in several versions or at least in a very similar form.

We can therefore establish a first important preliminary result: the scandal report according to al-Buḥārī was disseminated in this form not two, but one hundred years after the incident. On the basis of the resemblances between the different versions, we can even reconstruct with some accuracy substantial portions of the original wording of the Zuhrī recension.

3.2 The Ibn Ishāq recension

Let us now turn to the Ibn Ishāq recension, keeping in mind that the original text of his report is lost. What we have are three later versions of his report transmitted according to students of his: in Ibn Hišām’s *Sīrah*³³ (reporting on the authority of al-Bakkā’ī), in aṭ-Ṭabarī’s *Ta’rīḥ*³⁴ (according to Salamah ibn al-Faḍl) and in ‘Umar ibn Šabbah’s *Ta’rīḥ al-Madīnah al-munawwarah*³⁵ (on the authority of Ibn ‘Ulayyah).³⁶ They are similar enough to ignore their minor variants for the purpose of this study.

Apart from his teacher az-Zuhrī, Ibn Ishāq lists two more sources for his story. The relevant *isnāds* are:

- 1 Ibn Ishāq < Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abbād³⁷ < (his father) ‘Abbād ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr³⁸ < ‘Ā’iṣah; and
- 2 Ibn Ishāq < ‘Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr (d. 130/747 or later)³⁹ < ‘Amrah bint ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. before 100/718)⁴⁰ < ‘Ā’iṣah.

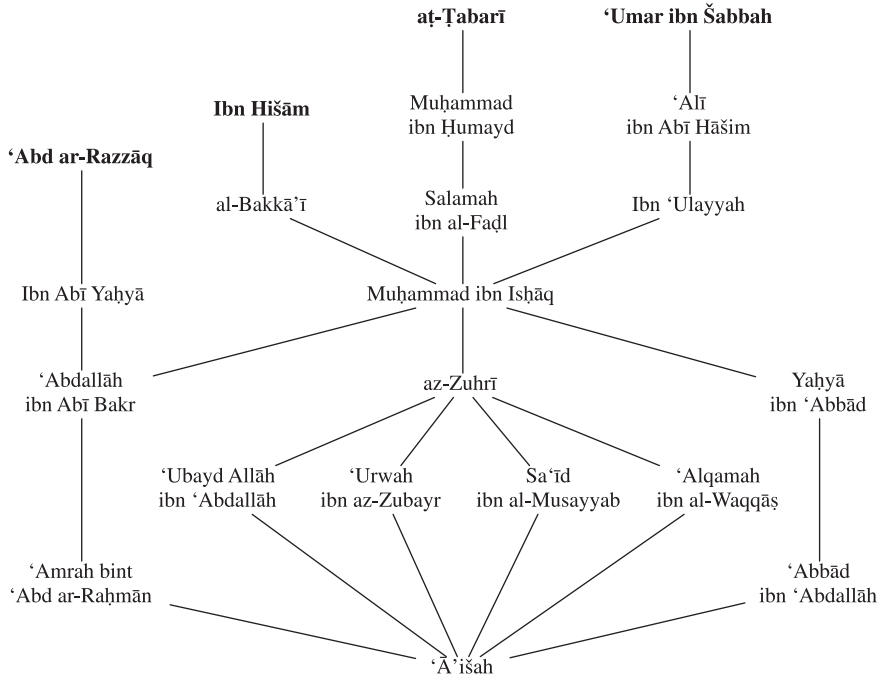


Figure 3.2 The Ibn Ishāq recension of the *ḥadīth al-ifk*

(see Figure 3.2) Ibn Ishāq claims to have merged the three reports.

The contents of Ibn Ishāq's recension are as follows:⁴¹

- 1 (= 1) As is his custom, the Prophet has his wives draw lots among themselves before a raid (in this version, we learn that it is against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq). 'Ā'īṣah's lot wins: she is permitted to accompany the Prophet.
- 2 (= 3) 'Ā'īṣah reasons that women at that time were very lightweight on account of their sparse diet. She was carried in a palanquin.
- 3 (= 2) On its return, the army stops over night near Medina. 'Ā'īṣah walks off to relieve herself and loses her necklace. Searching for it takes some time, but she finds it at last. In the meantime, the army has left without her. The carriers did not notice that she was not in her palanquin.
- 4 (= 4) Šafwān ibn al-Mu'aṭṭal discovers 'Ā'īṣah and escorts her to the army.
- 5 (= 5a) 'Ā'īṣah is wrongfully accused on account of the incident.
- 6 (= 6) Immediately after her return, 'Ā'īṣah falls ill and thus remains ignorant of the scandal. Only Muḥammad's unwonted indifference towards her arouses her suspicion.
- 7 (= 8) The Prophet allows her to return to her parents' home.

- 8 (= 7) During a nightly walk to relieve herself she meets Umm Miṣṭaḥ. The latter informs her about the scandal.
- 9 (= 9) She discusses the scandal with her mother Umm Rūmān, who is already aware of the news.
- 10 (= 11) In a public speech (*ḥuṭbah*), the Prophet comments on the scandal.
- 11 (= 5b) ‘Ā’iṣah names the main slanderers. These are ‘Abdallāh ibn Ubayy, Miṣṭaḥ and Ḥamnah.
- 12 (= 16) (Connected to the reference to Ḥamnah:) ‘Ā’iṣah praises the Prophet’s wife Zaynab, sister of Ḥamnah. Unlike her sister, Zaynab has only good things to say of ‘Ā’iṣah.
- 13 (= 12) Immediately after Muḥammad’s *ḥuṭbah*, a conflict erupts between the Banū l-Aws whose spokesman is *Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr* (!) and the Banū l-Ḥazraḡ whose spokesman is Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah.
- 14 (= 10) Muḥammad consults with ‘Alī and Usāmah on what to do next. He queries a servant by the name of Barīrah about ‘Ā’iṣah.
- 15 (= 13) Muḥammad visits the griefstricken ‘Ā’iṣah, who still remains in her parents’ home, and asks her to repent. She insists on her innocence.
- 16 (= 14) Revelation of *sūrah* 24: 11ff. which establishes ‘Ā’iṣah’s innocence.
- 17 (+) The Prophet delivers another *ḥuṭbah*, in which he recites the revealed verses. He then orders corporal punishment *ḥadd* to be carried out against Miṣṭaḥ, Ḥassān ibn Ṭābit and Ḥamnah.
- 18 (+) (With a new *isnād*;) Abū Ayyūb and his wife talk about ‘Ā’iṣah’s innocence.
- 19 (+) ‘Ā’iṣah recites verbatim the verses revealed about her (*sūrah* 24: 11ff.) and explains them.

As we can see above, Ibn Ishāq’s recension partially matches that of az-Zuhrī – we even find verbatim agreements. In other parts, however, the recensions display a substantial amount of variation. Some motifs are rearranged and, most importantly, we find several *additional* motifs. The chronological presentation is striking: the scandal is placed at the end of the raid against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq (also called al-Muraysi’ after the location), which, according to Ibn Ishāq, took place in the year 6 AH. This is not the case in all the versions which only follow the Zuhri recension.

In addition, Ibn Ishāq puts Muḥammad’s visit to ‘Ā’iṣah and his permission for her to return to her parents (7) *before* ‘Ā’iṣah learns about the scandal through Umm Miṣṭaḥ (8); the Prophet’s consultation with ‘Alī and Usāmah and the questioning of Barīrah (14) take place *after* his *ḥuṭbah* (10) and the conflict between the Banū l-Aws and the Banū l-Ḥazraḡ (13).

Finally, Ibn Ishāq reports a second *ḥuṭbah* (17), in which Muḥammad announces the revelation and orders corporal punishment against the three slanderers (interestingly, ‘Abdallāh ibn Ubayy is not included).

A new element Ibn Ishāq adds to a motif both recensions share is ‘Alī’s use of violence against the servant Barīrah to intimidate her and force her to tell the truth about ‘Ā’iṣah.⁴² There are other divergences as well.⁴³

If we examine Ibn Ishāq's claim to have used two other sources alongside the Zuhri recension, we find that there is enough evidence to confirm that he used the first of these two extra sources; the same is at least likely in the case of the second. The rest cannot be assessed, because the material specific to Ibn Ishāq has not turned up in any other source.

One of the motifs in Ibn Ishāq's version missing in the Zuhri recension, the second *ḥuṭbah* of the Prophet and the subsequent punishment of the three slanderers, occurs in a separate tradition which Ibn Ishāq also transmitted outside his *Kitāb al-mağāzī*. Its *isnād* traces the tradition through 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr < 'Amrah to 'Ā'īshah. Thus, it is one of the chains of transmitters which – as part of a collective *isnād* – precede the *ḥadīth al-ifk* in the *Kitāb al-mağāzī*.⁴⁴ This is one version of the text:⁴⁵

(Ibn Abī 'Adī [Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, d. 192/807–8 or two years later]⁴⁶ < Ibn Ishāq < 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr < 'Amrah < 'Ā'īshah:) When my innocence was revealed, the Messenger of God mounted the *minbar*, related (what had happened) and recited the *Qur'ān* (i.e. the revelation in question). When he came down, he ordered that two men and one woman receive corporal punishment (*ḥadd*).

Two other versions⁴⁷ name the slanderers. In one of them, we read:

(an-Nufaylī ['Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad, d. 234/848–9]⁴⁸ < Muḥammad ibn Salamah al-Bāhilī [d. 192/807]⁴⁹ < Ibn Ishāq < 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr ... :) He then ordered that two men and one woman of those who had uttered the abomination (receive corporal punishment): Ḥassān ibn Tābit and Miṣṭah ibn Utāṭah. An-Nufaylī says: And it is said that the woman was Ḥannah bint Ḡaḥṣ.⁵⁰

In Ibn Ishāq's recension of the slander story in his *Kitāb al-mağāzī* (as transmitted by Ibn Hišām) which contains this passage (17) as an additional element compared to the Zuhri recension, it takes the following form:

He [scil. the Prophet] then went out to the people. He spoke to them and recited to them the *Qur'ān*, which God had revealed to him about it. He then ordered that Miṣṭah ibn Utāṭah, Ḥassān ibn Tābit and Ḥannah bint Ḡaḥṣ – and they were among those who had uttered the abomination – receive their corporal punishment (*ḥadd*).⁵¹

A tradition going back to the same Ibn Ishāq and passed on by him separately (i.e. outside of the *Kitāb al-mağāzī*) is, of course, in itself no proof that he actually received a corresponding tradition, included in his *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, from the source he quotes instead of inventing it. But the tradition according to 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr was also transmitted independently of Ibn Ishāq, e.g. in 'Abd ar-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* and his *Tafsīr*⁵² (see Figure 3.3). In the *Muṣannaf*, it takes the following form:

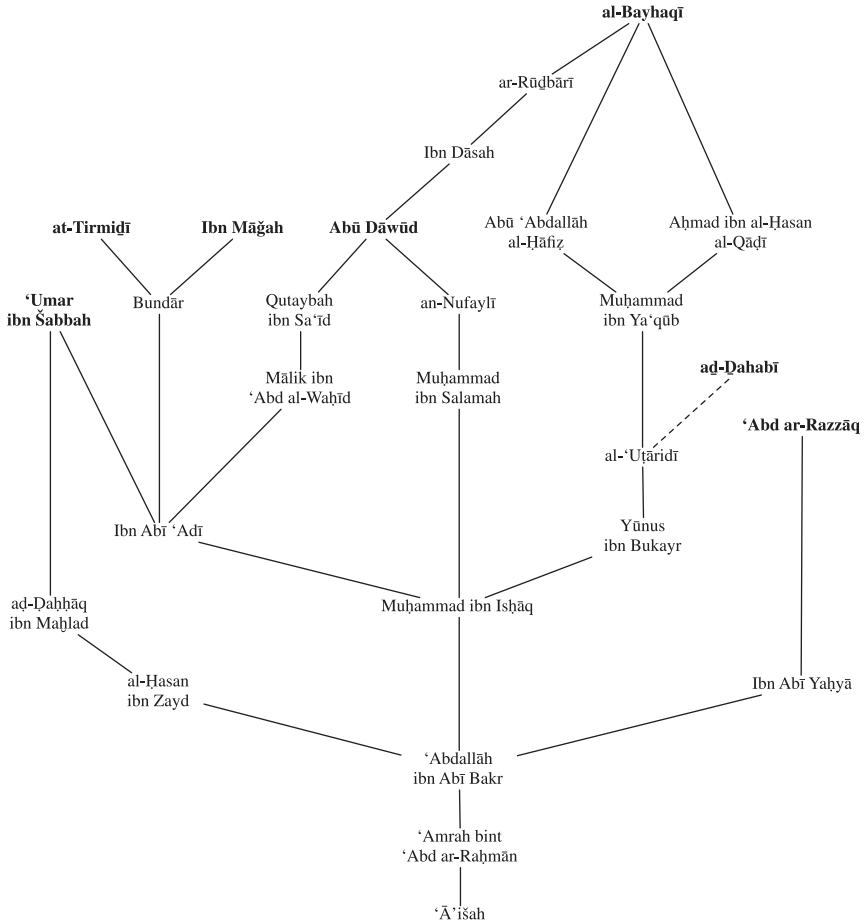


Figure 3.3 The ḥadīth according to 'Ā'īshah, 'When my innocence was revealed' (*lamma nazala 'udrī*)

('Abd ar-Razzāq < Ibn Abī Yahyā [Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad, d. 184/800 or 191/806–7]⁵³ < 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr < 'Amrah < 'Ā'īshah.) She [scil. 'Ā'īshah] said: when God had revealed her innocence (*barā'ata-hā*), the Prophet inflicted corporal punishment upon those who had uttered that (abomination) about her (*ḥadda ... allaḍīna qālū mā qālū fihā*).

In another version independent of Ibn Ishāq, the slanderers – the males at least – are named:

(Abū 'Āṣim an-Nabīl [aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāq ibn Maḥlad, d. 211/826–7 or a few years later]⁵⁴ < al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd al-'Alawī [d. 168/784–5]⁵⁵ < 'Abdallāh ibn Abī

Bakr:) The messenger of God ordered Ḥassān and Miṣṭaḥ to be beaten. Abū ʿĀṣim said: ‘I asked him [scil. al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd]: “And the woman?” He answered: “The woman also received corporal punishment.”’⁵⁶

Clearly, Ibn Iṣḥāq used an additional source: the tradition he mentioned in the collective *isnād*, received from ʿAbdallāh ibn Abī Bakr. Thus, he did not forge a tradition. The designation of *two* male culprits, Ḥassān ibn Tābit and Miṣṭaḥ, noticeably excluding ʿAbdallāh ibn Ubayy who is named in the Zuhri recension, is another element which obviously originated with ʿAbdallāh ibn Abī Bakr.

Ibn Iṣḥāq’s use of an additional source probably also applies to the other passage in his account of the scandal for which we have a parallel tradition under his name outside of the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*. In this case, however, we have not yet found a transmission independent of Ibn Iṣḥāq to confirm our hypothesis. The passage does not consist of additional material *not* found in the Zuhri recension, but a parallel or doublet of a motif already reported by az-Zuhri.

The *isnād* of the text is: Ibn Iṣḥāq < Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbbād⁵⁷ < ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbdallāh⁵⁸ < ʿĀʾiṣah. (a) In the version transmitted independently of the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī* we read:

The messenger of God summoned ʿAlī and Usāmah ibn Zayd and asked them for advice. Usāmah spoke very well (of me); he said: ‘We only know good things about your wife. This is absurd and a lie (*hādā al-bāṭil wa-l-kaḍīb*).’ ʿAlī on the other hand said: ‘There are many women. You can repudiate her (*wa inna-ka la-qādir an tastahriḡa*). Just ask the maid; she will tell the truth!’⁵⁹

(b) In the version included in the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī* (according to Ibn Hiṣām) we read:

He summoned ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Usāmah ibn Zayd and asked them for advice. Usāmah spoke very well (of me) and (also) expressed this. He said: ‘O Messenger of God! We only know good things about your wife and one only knows good things about her. This is a lie and absurd.’ But ʿAlī said: ‘O Messenger of God! There are many women. You can take another instead of her (*inna-ka la-qādir ʿalā an tastahlifa*). Just ask the maid, she will tell you the truth!’⁶⁰

For comparison, this is the parallel text in the Zuhri recension:

Since a revelation failed to occur, the messenger of God summoned ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Usāmah ibn Zayd to ask their advice about a divorce from his wife. She [scil. ʿĀʾiṣah] said: ‘Usāmah told the messenger of God what he knew about the innocence of his [scil. the Prophet’s] wife and what he himself knew about her love (for him). He said: “O Messenger of God, she is your wife and we know only good things (about her).” But ʿAlī said: “God has not been stingy to you (*lam yuḍayyiq Allāh ʿalay-ka*). There are many other women besides her. If you ask the maid, she will tell you the truth.’⁶¹”

Obviously, Ibn Ishāq followed Yaḥyā's transmission in the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, not that of az-Zuhrī. It is unlikely that he invented the former, since both traditions are identical in meaning. Why should he have bothered to forge a doublet with the same meaning? Therefore, we have to assume that, for some reason, he liked Yaḥyā's tradition better and preferred it. Perhaps he was prompted by the fine phrase 'absurd and a lie' and the succinctness of Yaḥyā's version.

There is another tradition Ibn Ishāq reported, outside of the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, on the authority of Yaḥyā ibn 'Abbād < 'Abbād ibn 'Abdallāh < 'Ā'īṣah. It also mentions the scandal. This tradition links the scandal story with another *sabab annuzūl* (occasion of revelation) narrative, which was – strangely enough – also triggered by 'Ā'īṣah's loss of a necklace: the revelation of the sand ablution verse (*tayammum*), *sūrahs* 4:43 and 5:6.⁶² The (alleged or true) transmitter after 'Ā'īṣah, 'Abbād ibn 'Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr, was actually her great nephew. He is said to have passed on a report from 'Ā'īṣah which begins as follows: 'When the said incident with the necklace had occurred and the slanderers (*ahl al-ifk*) had said this and I (subsequently) left with the Prophet on another raid, my necklace again fell off ...'⁶³

This tradition represents one piece of evidence, but admittedly no strong proof, for the idea that Yaḥyā ibn 'Abbād was one of Ibn Ishāq's informants for the slander story (or parts of it). Be that as it may, these are our results at this stage:

- Ibn Ishāq drew, for his own recension of the story, mainly on the Zuhrī recension. The latter must already have had the structure which is known to us today. Incidentally, this demonstrates that the Zuhrī recension was already known about one century after the event.
- Ibn Ishāq supplemented his recension with material from other traditions or elements thereof.
- (At least) *one* of these secondary traditions is extant in a transmission independent of Ibn Ishāq.

Excursus: Chronology

To conclude our discussion of this recension, we have to answer an important chronological question:⁶⁴ why did Ibn Ishāq link the scandal story with the raid against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq?⁶⁵ This synchronization puts the incident, in Ibn Ishāq's recension, in the year 6/627.⁶⁶ The link and chronological arrangement is foreign to both the (original) Zuhrī recension and a recension according to Hišām ibn 'Urwah.⁶⁷ Yet, Ibn Ishāq and al-Buḥārī claim that it was az-Zuhrī who connected the scandal story and the raid in question in a separate tradition. In this context, Ibn Ishāq⁶⁸ quotes the following *isnād*: 'somebody I do not suspect'⁶⁹ < az-Zuhrī < 'Urwah < 'Ā'īṣah. Al-Buḥārī's⁷⁰ authority is an-Nu'mān ibn Rāsid < az-Zuhrī. At any rate, the synchronicity of the raid and the scandal story is often found with the generation *following* az-Zuhrī, to which Ibn Ishāq also belonged. Apart from Ibn Ishāq and an-Nu'mān ibn Rāsid,⁷¹ the following transmitters combine *ifk* narration and raid:

- 1 Aflaḥ ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Muġīrah, who quotes the Zuhrī recension in a special, amplified form.⁷²
- 2 Abū Uways (d. 167/783–4),⁷³ who claims to transmit on the authority of Hišām ibn ‘Urwah. In fact, his text is a slightly paraphrased and expanded version of az-Zuhrī’s account.⁷⁴
- 3 Al-Walīd ibn Muḥammad al-Muwaqqa’irī (d. before Ramaḍān 182/798);⁷⁵ his version adds all sorts of dubious material to the Zuhrī text.⁷⁶
- 4 Al-Wāqidī (cf. below p. 91).

In addition, we have a few apocryphal reports on the ‘Ā’iṣah affair not transmitted according to az-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah; their motifs, however, suggest that they depend on the Zuhrī recension, which they embellish with a large amount of questionable material:

- 5 A tradition traced back to ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar as the original informant.⁷⁷ It is closely related to (3) above.
- 6 A tradition traced back to Abū Hurayrah as the original informant.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the synchronization was not universally accepted. According to aṭ-Ṭabarī,⁷⁹ Ibn Ishāq himself transmitted an alternative chronology (on the authority of ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Ḥamzah,⁸⁰ apparently outside of the *Kitāb al-maġāzī*) placing the incident at the time of the ‘*umrat al-qaḍā*’ (Pilgrimage of Fulfilment) (i.e. in the year 7/629). Locating the incident, as Ibn Ishāq does in his *Kitāb al-maġāzī*, at the end of the raid against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq in 6 AH raises the following difficulty: Sa’d ibn Mu’āḍ,⁸¹ who according to both the Zuhrī and Hišām ibn ‘Urwah versions⁸² led the Banū l-Aws in their conflict with the Banū l-Ḥazraġ, cannot have been alive at this point. He died after the Battle of the Trench (Šawwāl 5 AH) from injuries he sustained during the fight; or, to be more precise, he died after the next raid against the Banū Qurayzah (5 AH), the tribe the mortally wounded Sa’d condemned to a horrible fate. Muslim *ḥadīṭ* scholars were aware of this problem,⁸³ as was Ibn Ishāq. He solved it by replacing Sa’d ibn Mu’āḍ (who, according to his chronology, cannot have been alive at this point) with Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr⁸⁴ (the latter also appears in the Zuhrī recension, but plays a role only at a later point). In all probability, Ibn Ishāq replaced Sa’d ibn Mu’āḍ with Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr not on the basis of some tradition (unknown to us), but his own reflection. This alteration does not have anything to do with historical forgery: as a historian, Ibn Ishāq thought that he had to intervene and correct the tradition. Al-Wāqidī’s solution for the same problem involves a more substantial reshuffling of events: he places the Battle of the Trench (taking place in Dū l-Qa’dah of the year 5 AH in his reckoning)⁸⁵ and the raid against the Banū Qurayzah (Dū l-Qa’dah and Dū l-Ḥiġġah 5 AH) immediately *after* the raid against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq (according to him in Ša’bān 5 AH).

It is not so much the chronological problem itself which concerns us here; perhaps, it cannot be solved anyway. That such a problem could arise at all reminds us that the oldest collectors, ‘Urwah and his generation, did not care too much (if

at all) about chronology.⁸⁶ In that respect, they resemble their informants, who passed 'oral traditions' to them. The lack of a reliable chronology is in fact almost definitely a sign of oral traditions.⁸⁷ Thus, the oldest collectors handed down the reports they had assembled without any chronological structure. When an awareness of and interest in chronology began to emerge two generations later (in the generation of Ibn Ishāq, to some extent already that of az-Zuhrī), scholars had to rely on their own speculation and intuition.⁸⁸ Since tradition did not provide dates, historians themselves began to investigate them⁸⁹ and often arrived at different results. Some of their findings do not withstand a critical inspection. Nevertheless, the previous discussion should lead to one important result: an often contradictory, unreliable and sometimes wrong chronology does *not* allow us automatically to conclude that a tradition is equally problematic.⁹⁰

3.3 The Wāqidī recension

Thus far, the early Islamic tradition system has in general made a good impression on us: when verifiable, *isnāds* have turned out to be correct and traditions were transmitted over long periods of time without radically changing their meaning. Our analysis of the third recension of the scandal story, that of al-Wāqidī,⁹¹ will demonstrate that this good impression should not be generalized and that without careful inspection, chains of transmitters cannot be taken at face value.

3.3a Contents and motif stock

- 0 The original informant, 'Ā'īshah's great nephew 'Abbād, asks her to relate what happened to her on occasion of the raid against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq. 'Ā'īshah begins her story.
- 1 (= 1) As is his custom, the Prophet has his wives draw lots among themselves before a raid. The winning lot is drawn by 'Ā'īshah and Umm Salamah: they are permitted to accompany the Prophet.
- 2 (+) After the raid, the army stops at a place without water. Nobody has any water for the ritual ablutions. 'Ā'īshah loses her necklace. The search for it delays the army. People get restless. Abū Bakr strongly reprimands his daughter. Revelation of the sand ablution verse (*sūrah* 4:43, 5:6), which allows believers under certain circumstances, e.g. when out of water, to perform the ablutions with sand, etc.⁹²
- 3 (= 3) 'Ā'īshah reasons that women of her time are very lightweight on account of their sparse diet. Like Umm Salamah, she is carried in a palanquin by two men.
- 4 (= 2) On its return, the army stops over night near Medina. 'Ā'īshah walks off to relieve herself and loses her necklace. Searching for it takes some time, but she finds it at last. In the meantime, the army has left without her. The carriers did not notice that she was not in her palanquin.
- 5 (= 4) Ṣafwān ibn al-Mu'attal discovers 'Ā'īshah and escorts her to the army.

- 6 (= 5) ‘Ā’iṣah is wrongfully accused for the incident, namely by ‘Abdallāh ibn Ubayy.
- 7 (= 6) Immediately after her return, ‘Ā’iṣah falls ill and thus remains ignorant of the scandal. Only Muḥammad’s unexpected indifference towards her arouses her suspicion.
- 8 (= 7) During a nightly walk to relieve herself, she meets Umm Miṣṭah. The latter informs her about the scandal.
- 9 (= 8) The Prophet allows her to return to her parents’ home.
- 10 (= 9) She discusses the scandal with her mother Umm Rūmān, who has already heard about it.
- 11 (= 10.) Muḥammad consults with ‘Alī and Usāmah on what to do next. He queries a servant by the name of Barīrah about ‘Ā’iṣah.
- 12 (= 16 +) Muḥammad also questions his wife Zaynab. – ‘Ā’iṣah praises Zaynab, who has only good things to say of ‘Ā’iṣah. Muḥammad questions a third woman; the results are identical.
- 13 (= 11) In a public speech (*ḥuṭbah*), the Prophet comments on the scandal.
- 14 (= 12 +) Immediately after Muḥammad’s *ḥuṭbah*, a conflict erupts between the Banū l-Aws whose leader and spokesman is Sa’d ibn Mu’ād and the Banū l-Ḥazrağ whose leader is Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah. The latter’s arguments are countered by Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr, another tribesman of the Banū l-AWs. The clash between the two tribes is described in great detail.
- 15 (= 13) Muḥammad visits the griefstricken ‘Ā’iṣah, who still remains in her parents’ home, and asks her to repent. She insists on her innocence.
- 16 (= 14) Revelation of *sūrah* 24: 11ff.
- 17 (= Ibn Ishāq 17) The Prophet delivers another *ḥuṭbah*, during which he recites the revealed verses. He then orders corporal punishment to be meted out to the culprits.
- 18 (= 5b +) The main perpetrators are named (‘Abdallāh ibn Ubayy, Miṣṭah, Ḥassān ibn Tābit).⁹³ Al-Wāqidī mentions that he prefers a variant according to which none of the culprits was punished. He then quotes another short tradition (on the authority of Sa’d ibn Ğubayr) about the affair.
- 19 (= Ibn Ishāq 18) (With a new *isnād*.) Abū Ayyūb and his wife talk about ‘Ā’iṣah’s innocence.
- 20 (+) (With a new *isnād*.) The same conversation about ‘Ā’iṣah’s innocence between another man and woman.
- 21 (+) (Anonymous tradition, introduced with *qālū* (they said):) The Prophet reconciles the leaders of the two tribes which clashed after the *ḥuṭbah*.

3.3b *The isnād*

Al-Wāqidī provides the following chain of transmitters: al-Wāqidī < Ya’qūb ibn Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abbād < ‘Īsā ibn Ma’mar < ‘Abbād ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr < ‘Ā’iṣah (cf. Figure 3.4). We immediately notice the similarity – but not identity – of this *isnād* with one of the three *isnāds* quoted by Ibn Ishāq (Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abbād < ‘Abbād < ‘Ā’iṣah). In both cases, ‘Ā’iṣah’s transmitter is her great nephew

‘Abbād. Moreover, al-Wāqidī’s immediate informant is the son of Ibn Ishāq’s immediate informant, who in turn is a grandson of ‘Ā’īshah’s transmitter and great nephew, ‘Abbād.

If we accept al-Wāqidī’s information for the moment, we find that his recension allegedly relies on the same ultimate source named in *one* of the three traditions quoted by Ibn Ishāq, i.e. ‘Abbād ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr. If that were the case, we would have to be able to identify in al-Wāqidī’s text certain motifs as well as motif elaborations and links we know from the Ibn Ishāq recension but which are absent from the Zuhri recension. This is indeed the case, e.g. in the scene in which Muḥammad asks ‘Alī and Usāmah for advice. In Ibn Ishāq’s recension, this motif in its specific guise was very likely derived from Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abbād < ‘Abbād.⁹⁴

Even more importantly, this is also the case for one main characteristic of the Wāqidī recension: the link between two different incidents in which ‘Ā’īshah lost her necklace (each time giving rise to a revelation). As we have seen above,⁹⁵ the same connection was established in an Ibn Ishāq tradition transmitted outside the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, reported on the authority of Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abbād < ‘Abbād < ‘Ā’īshah. Al-Wāqidī has not only reproduced this connection, he has also placed the two instances in the context of the same raid,⁹⁶ while Ibn Ishāq explicitly assigned them to different raids. Moreover, Ibn Ishāq placed the scandal before the event which gave rise to the *tayammum* revelation; whereas al-Wāqidī has reversed this sequence.

3.3c Al-Wāqidī’s actual sources

There is no need to follow this lead any further: al-Wāqidī is misleading us – certainly intentionally. A comparison of the texts demonstrates that he does not quote Ibn Ishāq’s informant, but (in addition to other sources) his *Kitāb al-maḡāzī* itself.⁹⁷ In many places, he follows the Ibn Ishāq recension, partly verbatim, partly by slightly paraphrasing the text. In numerous other places, he also replicates az-Zuhri’s recension of the story in the same way.

As can be seen from our outline, the sequence of motifs generally agrees with that of the Zuhri recension. Where they differ, al-Wāqidī mostly follows the Ibn Ishāq recension: like the latter, he places ‘Ā’īshah’s musings on the sparse diet and modest weight of women (3) before the account of the army’s nightly stop (4). In contrast to az-Zuhri, but similar to Ibn Ishāq, ‘Ā’īshah’s positive verdict on Zaynab, the other wife of the Prophet, constitutes not an annex, but part of the main narration. However, Ibn Ishāq situates it after the *ḥuṭbah* and the subsequent list of slanderers; al-Wāqidī after the questioning of Barīrah (11).

The following observation gives us the decisive piece of evidence for the fact that al-Wāqidī indeed plagiarized Ibn Ishāq: immediately after his report about the punishment of the three slanderers (Ibn Ishāq 17), Ibn Ishāq adds a tradition according to ‘his father < a man of the Banū Naḡḡār’ concerning a conversation about ‘Ā’īshah between the Naḡḡārī Abū Ayyūb and his wife Umm Ayyūb (Ibn Ishāq 18). Al-Wāqidī quotes the text of the same tradition – almost verbatim – also after the report of the punishment of the slanderers, but inserts between the

two reports a very short tradition of less than two lines on the authority of Sa'īd ibn Ğubayr. He has altered the family *isnād* Ibn Ishāq uses to introduce the Abū Ayyūb tradition: in his version, the informant relating the conversation of the couple is not 'a man of the Banū Nağğār', but – a clever detail! – Abū Ayyūb's *mawlā* called Aflah.

In addition to Ibn Ishāq and az-Zuhrī, al-Wāqidī used at least one other source (cf. Figure 3.4.) Even at the beginning of his report, it becomes clear that his sources were not limited to the Zuhrī and Ibn Ishāq recension of the scandal story. He writes that not only 'Ā'īshah's but also Umm Salamah's lot was drawn before the raid on the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq (1): a further characteristic trait of his recension.

Our corpus contains two other closely related traditions which also contain this motif. One of them,⁹⁸ closer to the Wāqidī recension, stems from a student of az-Zuhrī, al-Walīd ibn Muḥammad al-Muwaqqarī (or al-Muwaqqirī) (d. before Ramaḍān 182/798).⁹⁹ He reports the story on the authority of az-Zuhrī; strangely, he continues the *isnād* in a single line through 'Urwah to 'Ā'īshah.¹⁰⁰ A closer look at his version, which contains a number of extra motifs¹⁰¹ compared to the Zuhrī versions known to us, reveals that our suspicion was correct: this – problematic – Zuhrī version was in fact al-Wāqidī's third main source. In both texts,¹⁰² the maid (when questioned) says of 'Ā'īshah: 'She is finer than the finest gold' (*inna-hā/hiya aṭyab min ṭayyib aḍ-ḍahab*).¹⁰³ This formulation is absent from both az-Zuhrī and Ibn Ishāq. Again, in both texts, Umm Miṣṭah says:¹⁰⁴ 'You do not know it, but the stream has already carried you away' (*mā tadrīna wa-qad sāla bi-ka s-sayl*); there is no equivalent in the other two recensions. Finally, 'Alī advises the Prophet in both texts¹⁰⁵ in no uncertain terms: 'God has made (it) lawful and pleasant to you. Divorce her and marry another (woman)' (*wa-qad aḥalla llāh la-ka wa-aṭāba, fa-ṭalliḡ-hā wa-nkaḡ ḡayra-hā*). In az-Zuhrī, 'Alī is less direct; in Ibn Ishāq, his choice of words is different.¹⁰⁶

Figure 3.5 illustrates how al-Wāqidī follows each of the texts in turn. The text of the Zuhrī recension is marked with **boldface**, the Ibn Ishāq recension in *italics*, the Muwaqqarī version is underlined, additions by al-Wāqidī and formulations of his own are given in normal type.

On closer inspection, we find that al-Wāqidī picked from each version exactly the most memorable expressions, the most prominent turns of phrase. From az-Zuhrī, he took 'Alī's declaration, 'God has not been stingy to you' (*lam yuḍayyiq Allāh 'alay-ka*), though not without a slight variation in the wording; from Ibn Ishāq, he preferred Usāmah's statement: 'This is absurd and a lie' (*hādā l-bāṭil al-kaḍīb*); an outstanding contribution of al-Muwaqqarī was, as we have seen above, the formulation, 'she is finer than the finest gold'.¹⁰⁷

Most of al-Wāqidī's report was derived from these three sources, but there remains a certain amount of unaccounted-for material. Some of it can be found in other traditions dealing with the scandal story, e.g. the request by 'Ā'īshah's young relative opening al-Wāqidī's text: 'O mother, tell us your story concerning the al-Muraysī' raid' (*ḥaddīṭī-nā yā ummah ḥadīṭa-ka fī ḡazwat al-Muraysī*). It occurs at the beginning of another, apocryphal tradition about the incident traced back to al-Aswad ibn Yazīd.¹⁰⁸ We read: 'O mother of the believers – or: O mother – tell

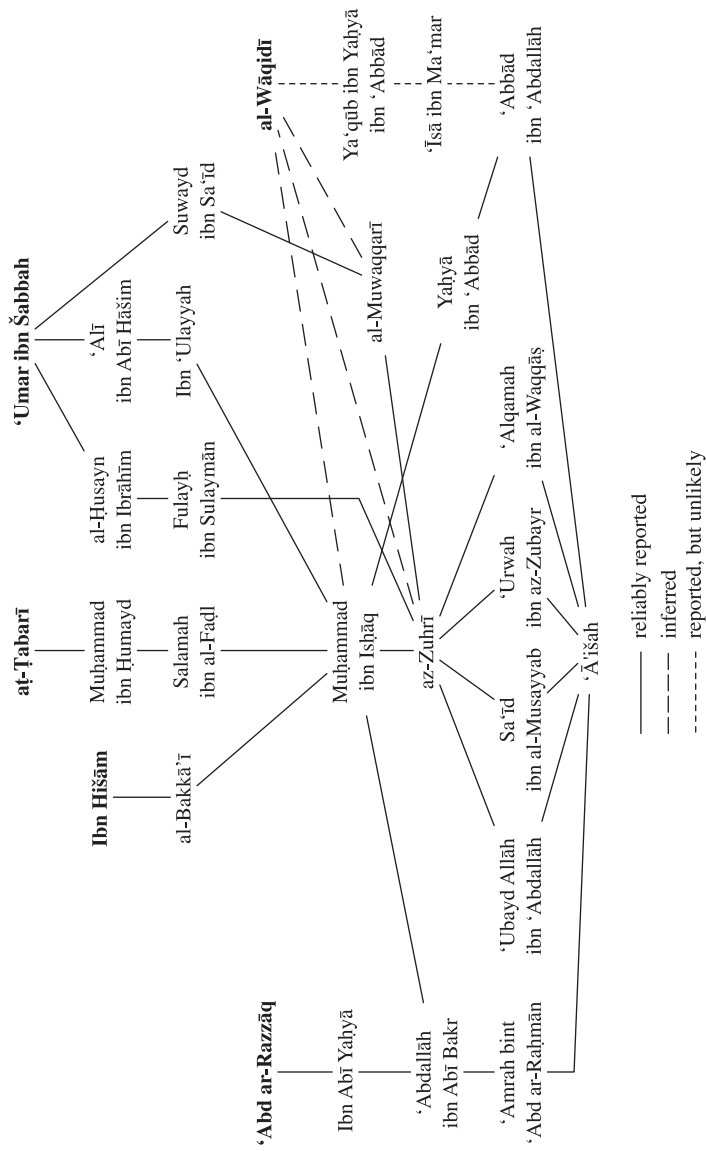


Figure 3.4 The Zuhri, Ibn Ishāq and Wāqidī recensions of the *ḥadīth al-iftikar*

qālat: **fa-da'ā rasūl Allāh (š) 'Alīyan wa-Usāmah**
 She said: the messenger of God summoned 'Alī and Usāmah

fa-stašāra-humā fi firāq ahli-hī.
 and sought their counsel concerning the parting of his wife

qālat: wa-kāna aḥad ar-rağulayn alyan qawlan min al-āḥar.
 She said: one of the two men was milder in his speech than the other

qāla Usāmah: **yā rasūl Allāh, hādā l-bāṭil wa-l-kaḏib**
 Usāmah said: Messenger of God, this is absurd and a lie

wa-lā na'lamu illā ḥayran wa-inna Barīrah taşduqu-ka.
 We only know good things (about her): Barīrah will tell you the truth

wa-qāla 'Alī: **lam yuḏayyiq Allāh 'alay-ka. an-nisā' kaṭīr**
 'Alī said: Good has not been stingy to you: there are many women

wa-qad aḥalla llāh la-ka wa-aṭāba wa-ṭalliq-hā wa-nkaḥ ḡayra-hā.
 God has made (it) lawful and pleasant to you. Divorce her and marry another (woman)

qālat: fa-nşarafā wa-ḥalā rasūl Allāh (š) bi-Barīrah
 She said: they departed and the Messenger of God was left alone with Barīrah

fa-qāla: **yā Barīrah ayy imra'ah ta'lamīna 'Ā'işah?** qālat:
 He said, 'O Barīrah, what kind of a woman do you know 'Ā'işah to be?' She said:

hiya aṭyab min ṭayyib aḏ-ḡahab **wa-llāh mā a'lamu illā ḥayran.**
 She is finer than the finest gold. By god, I know nothing but good (about her)

wa-llāh yā rasūl Allāh **la-in kānat 'alā ḡayr ḡalika**
 By God, O Messenger of God, if she were otherwise

la-yuḥbiranna-ka llāh 'azza wa-ğalla bi-ḡalika.
 God, Great and Glorious!, would inform you about it

illā anna-hā ḡāriyah tarqudu **'an al-'ağīn ḥattā ta'tiya ş-şāh**
 Yet she is a girl who does not pay attention to the dough – then the sheep comes

fa-ta'kula 'ağīna-hā, wa-qad lumtu-hā fi ḡalika ḡayr marrah.
 and eats her dough! I have criticized her for this more than once.

Figure 3.5 Al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, II, p. 430 and the sources

me, how it was – the affair with the lie, that is' (*yā umm al-mu'minīn aw yā ummatāh a-lā tuḥaddīṭī-nī kayfa kāna ya'nī amr al-ifk*).

A characteristic sentence in al-Wāqidī's extensive description of the conflict between the two Medinese tribes – a scene missing in al-Muwaqqarī's text – has a parallel in another apocryphal tradition which is closely related to

al-Muwaqqarī's account and reported on the authority of 'Abdallāh ibn 'Umar.¹⁰⁹ According to the text, Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah, leader of the Ḥazrag, said the following to Sa'd ibn Mu'āḏ, leader of the Aws: 'You sought to obtain a blood-revenge which existed between us in pre-Islamic times (*inna-mā ṭalabta-nā bi-ḍuḥūl kānat bayna-nā wa-bayna-kum fī l-ḡāhiliyah*).¹¹⁰ In al-Wāqidī's account,¹¹¹ we find a passage with parallel meaning and partially matching the wording of the previous quotation: *wa-lākinna-ka ta'ḥuḍu-nā bi-ḍuḥūl kānat bayna-nā wa-bayna-ka fī l-ḡāhiliyah* ('But you seek to take a blood-recompense which existed between us in pre-Islamic times'). This scene is much more elaborate and detailed in al-Wāqidī than in any other version known to us. Some of the additional material not occurring in other sources could consist of (explanatory) additions by al-Wāqidī, e.g. 'Ā'īshah's statement concerning 'Alī and Usāmah: 'One was gentler (*alyan*) than the other'.¹¹² Nevertheless, he probably used further sources here and there; finally, some of these additions could have been the products of his imagination.

Excursus: Al-Wāqidī's use of his sources and his relation to Ibn Ishāq

Al-Wāqidī's use of his sources was studied in the nineteenth century. In the preliminary remarks to his abridged edition of the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, Wellhausen wrote:

al-Wāqidī never cites Ibn Ishāq among his informants, but here, he has, as it were, borrowed the framework from him and inserted his own additions. These additions invariably interrupt the main narration. ... Proposing that al-Wāqidī used Ibn Ishāq as his source does not exclude that he collected other, independent testimonies for the reports of the latter and sometimes modified them accordingly.¹¹³

Wellhausen's last claim in particular has been corroborated by our analysis of the sources for the scandal story.

In his dissertation *De Wāqidii libro qui Kitāb al-Maḡāzī inscribitur*, Horovitz conclusively demonstrated on the basis of ten passages that 'Ibn Ishāq's book was frequently al-Wāqidī's source', even if he never explicitly quoted him.¹¹⁴ Our study has unearthed further evidence. Yet, the well-founded results of Wellhausen and Horovitz have in recent times been called into question by the editor of the *Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, J. M. B. Jones, in his article 'Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī'. In her book *Meccan Trade*, Crone has adopted his position (not, however, on the basis of her own source analysis). Summing up his argument, she writes:

Wāqidī did not plagiarize Ibn Ishāq, but he did not offer an independent version of the Prophet's life, either: what he, Ibn Ishāq, and others put together were simply so many selections from a common pool of *qāṣṣ* material.¹¹⁵

For the story analysed above – and the entire Wāqidī text – we can safely conclude that this position has become untenable. Our source analysis has identified in al-Wāqidī's text numerous individual characteristics (wording, motif stock, motif elaboration and sequence) of the recensions and traditions of az-Zuhrī, Ibn Ishāq and al-Muwaqqarī. The evidence for al-Wāqidī's use of these recensions and traditions as his source is overwhelming, even if he often varies or paraphrases the wording and even if he occasionally includes additional material, the origin of which remains unclear.

Having studied the Wāqidī recension, we can now establish the following results: in addition to authentic traditions accompanied by accurate ascriptions to authorities, there are a number of inauthentic traditions. In the case of al-Wāqidī's account of the scandal story, falsification does not apply to the contents (even though a number of 'false' motifs slip into his text due to his use of inauthentic traditions) as much as it does to the information on his sources. We can confidently assert that this information was consciously and intentionally forged.

Excursus: The Wansbrough hypothesis – some remarks on the application of the 'transmission historical method' to early historical texts

We are now in a position to assess Wansbrough's hypothesis on the development of the scandal story.¹¹⁶ Our findings show that this development took place in a manner almost diametrically opposed to his account:

- 1 The version he calls the 'Buḥārī recension' and which he assumes to be the latest in terms of chronology and development is in fact closest to the basic form of the story, the Zuhrī recension. It frequently matches its very wording (cf. the 'Abd ar-Razzāq version). The character of the report, interpreted by Wansbrough as 'reductive' and thus 'paradigmatic' (he categorizes it as *ḥadīth*, 'tradition' as opposed to *qiṣṣah*, 'narration'), has to be explained differently: the tradition is an unmixed and barely modified form of the story which came into circulation at a relatively early date (the second generation of the Medinese school). Its redactor, az-Zuhrī, cultivated a terse and sober style.¹¹⁷
- 2 The version he identifies as the 'basic form', the Ibn Ishāq recension, is in fact (as Ibn Ishāq himself informs us) a Zuhrī version expanded with material from other traditions. Wansbrough's classification of this text as a *qiṣṣah* (a 'narration' as opposed to *ḥadīth*, paradigmatic 'tradition') is not surprising given the fact that the narrative character of the report becomes more prominent through the addition of new motifs and details.
- 3 The Wāqidī recension Wansbrough interpreted as an intermediate step in the development from the recension of Ibn Ishāq to the alleged 'Buḥārī recension' is in fact furthest removed from the basic form, since it merges material of the Zuhrī and Ibn Ishāq recensions on the one hand with material of further (inauthentic) traditions on the other. Al-Wāqidī's inclusion of

additional narrative motifs and his clever composition of the material as well as his desire for a stylistically pleasing narration led Wansbrough to regard it as a 'refined' version of Ibn Ishāq's text.

Few literatures allow us to reconstruct the history of transmission as easily and as successfully as the Arabic-Islamic does. One reason is the sheer amount of material available for comparison; another the existence of chains of transmitters (*asānīd*) as part of most traditions. To ignore these chains would mean to discard one of the most important tools we have. Yet, they cannot be used uncritically. Often enough, the part of the *isnād* (chronologically) after the CL is historically valid, the part preceding it (normally a single strand) a later addition and ahistorical (with or without fraudulent intentions). Al-Wāqidi constitutes one example of the use of falsified or at least heavily manipulated chains of transmitters.

Isnād analysis alone is not sufficient to spot these falsifications. Frequently, a comparison of the contents of different traditions belonging to one tradition complex is necessary to identify them. The chances of successfully carrying out such a study are best when based on a comprehensive corpus of traditions belonging to such a complex.

Wansbrough's analysis of the scandal story illustrates the problems caused by picking only the best known traditions of a complex. He rashly adopted concepts and methods developed in Old Testament studies and applied them to three cases which had not first been placed in their proper historical transmission context. Another example for such a procedure is Sellheim's study of the first revelation experience.¹¹⁸

3.4 Az-Zuhrī's informants

The next and decisive question is that of the sources quoted by az-Zuhrī. Its answer is central to our concern: if we were able to prove that he received the report from the informants he cites, we would have demonstrated that the scandal story was already in circulation in the first century AH. In his *isnād*, az-Zuhrī not only quotes the usual single informant, but four ('Urwah, Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab, 'Ubayd Allāh ibn 'Abdallāh ibn 'Utbah, 'Alqamah ibn Waqqāṣ), each of whom reports on the authority of 'Ā'īṣah.

For Juynboll, who calls such configurations 'inverted common links',¹¹⁹ the existence of four transmitters is evidence for the historicity of a tradition. Without commenting on Juynboll's argument, we should keep in mind that in the entire *Sīrah* (to be more precise: in Ibn Hišām's recension of the work), Ibn Ishāq apparently used such a multiple (or 'collective') *isnād* comparatively rarely¹²⁰ and only for major historical events (Badr, Uḥud, the Battle of the Trench, Tabūk) or important incidents (e.g. the raid against Ka'b ibn al-Ašraf and the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq). The 'Ā'īṣah affair, for which Ibn Ishāq's transmitter, az-Zuhrī, already provided a collective *isnād*, also falls under this category.

There are several reasons why we should not *a priori* brand as falsified Ibn Ishāq's and az-Zuhrī's references and why we can assume that they probably

received their material from the informants they name: first, it was highly likely that Ibn Ishāq and az-Zuhrī were in fact able to find more than one informant for these events; secondly, according to the contemporary standards of *ḥadīth* scholars, the provision of more than one transmitter (or the quotation of a collective *isnād*) was not a requirement.¹²¹ At any rate, we have no grounds to assume forgery at least for the main outline of the events. This is, of course, not yet valid proof. We can, however, prove that at least one of az-Zuhrī's informants, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, disseminated the story in the first century AH: there is a recension of the story, also reported on the authority of 'Urwah, which is traced not through az-Zuhrī, but another prominent student of 'Urwah, his son Hišām.

3.5 The Hišām ibn 'Urwah recension

In contrast to az-Zuhrī, Hišām ibn 'Urwah transmits from one informant only, his father 'Urwah. The latter in turn reports, as in the Zuhrī recension, on the authority of his aunt 'Ā'īshah. Hišām's recension has been transmitted frequently, if not as frequently as az-Zuhrī's. It is extant in (at least) three complete and one or two¹²² abridged versions (see Figure 3.6).

The complete versions are traced back to Hišām's students Abū Usāmah (201/816–7),¹²³ Ḥammād ibn Salamah (d. 167/783–4)¹²⁴ and Yūnus ibn Bukayr (d. 199/814–15),¹²⁵ the incomplete version¹²⁶ to Yaḥyā ibn Abī Zakarīyā' (d. 188/803–4 or two years later).¹²⁷ According to Ibn Ḥaḡar,¹²⁸ there were more versions. The following major authorities included versions of the recension in their compilations: al-Buḡārī,¹²⁹ Muslim,¹³⁰ at-Tirmidī,¹³¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī,¹³² Aḡmad ibn Ḥanbal¹³³ and 'Umar ibn Ṣabbah.¹³⁴ Furthermore, aḍ-Ḍahabī quotes the only instance (known to me) of the Yūnus ibn Bukayr version¹³⁵ and aṭ-Ṭabarānī has the two other versions side by side.¹³⁶

3.5a Contents and motif stock

First of all, an outline of the contents of the version al-Buḡārī reports on the authority of Abū Usāmah:¹³⁷

- 1 (= 11) In a public speech (*ḥuṭbah*), the Prophet comments on the scandal.
- 2 (= 12) Immediately afterwards, a conflict erupts between the Banū l-Aws and Banū l-Ḥazraġ. The only person named is the leader of the Aws, Sa'd ibn Mu'āḍ.
- 3 (= 7) During a nightly walk to relieve herself, 'Ā'īshah meets Umm Miṣṭaḡ. The latter informs her about the scandal.
- 4 (= 8) The Prophet sends 'Ā'īshah to her parents' house in the company of a slave.
- 5 (= 9) She discusses the scandal with her mother and her father Abū Bakr. He sends her back to the Prophet's house.
- 6 (= 10) Muḡammad queries an (unnamed) maid about 'Ā'īshah.
- 7 (+) (a) The (unnamed) companion of 'Ā'īshah comments on the slanderous allegations. (b) She mentions the fate of this companion.

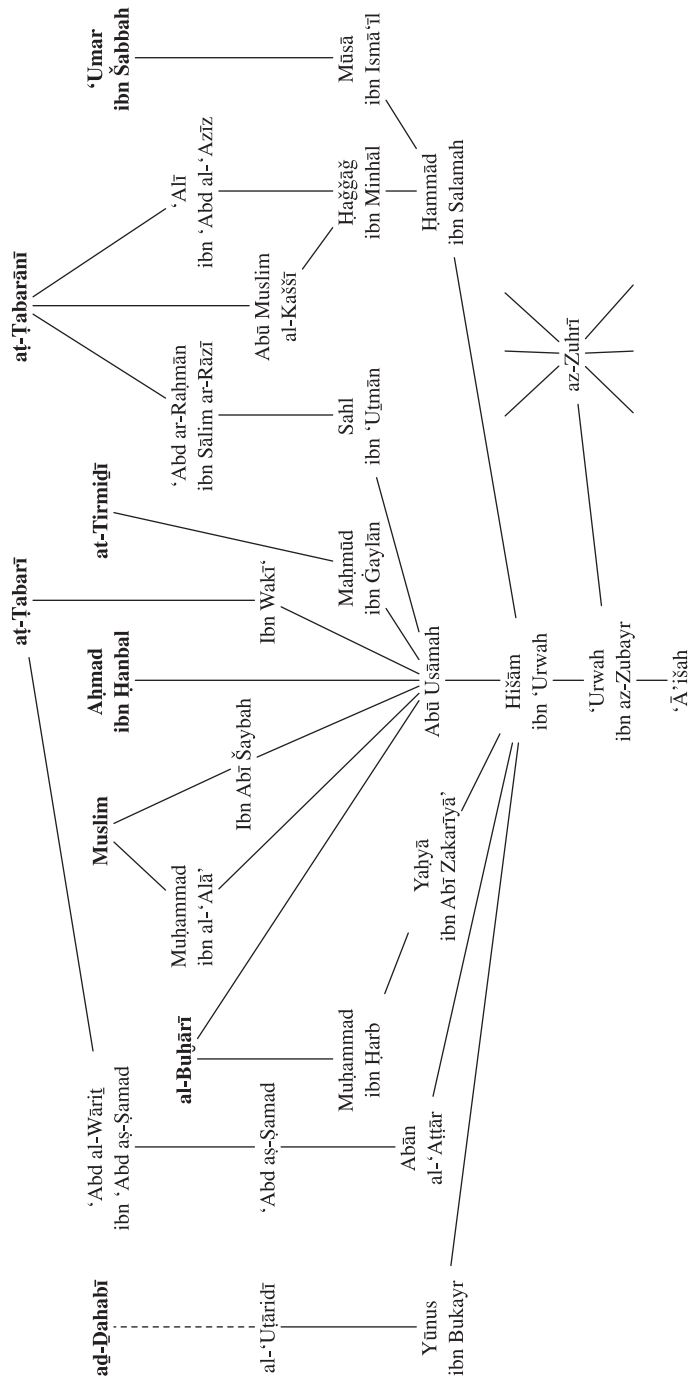


Figure 3.6 The Hišām ibn 'Urwah recension of the ḥadīth al-īfḵ

- 8 (= 13) Muḥammad asks ‘Ā’iṣah to repent in her parents’ presence. She insists on her innocence.
- 9 (= 14) Revelation of *sūrah* 24:11ff.
- 10 (= 16) ‘Ā’iṣah praises the Prophet’s wife Zaynab, sister of Ḥammah, who has only good things to say of ‘Ā’iṣah.
- 11 (= 5b) ‘Ā’iṣah lists the main culprits. These are Miṣṭaḥ, Ḥassān ibn Ṭābit, Ḥammah and ‘Abdallāh ibn Ubayy.
- 12 (= 15) Abū Bakr swears to withdraw his support from Miṣṭaḥ. Revelation of *sūrah* 24: 22. Abū Bakr retracts his oath.

3.5b Its characteristic traits and its relation to the Zuhrī recension

The outline above largely covers the same ground as az-Zuhrī’s story. The main difference is the absence in Hišām ibn ‘Urwah’s recension of the preceding events, i.e. the tale of the necklace and its loss on the way back from a raid. It is unclear whether Hišām is unfamiliar with the necklace story (because he did not hear it from his father) or whether he consciously dropped it (perhaps because he takes it for granted). Whatever the case, his narration does not begin until the return to Medina. Other differences concern more or less prominent details, such as the role of Abū Bakr, for example. He sends his daughter back to the Prophet’s house (5), so that the revelation takes place in ‘Ā’iṣah’s house, not that of Abū Bakr (as related by az-Zuhrī).

Additional material not found in the Zuhrī recension are the statements of Ṣafwān ibn Mu‘aṭṭal (who in this recension remains unnamed), ‘Ā’iṣah’s companion and also victim of the slanderers, about the allegations and ‘Ā’iṣah’s remark on his future fate (7b).¹³⁸

The anonymity of a number of persons named in the Zuhrī recension is a conspicuous characteristic of the Hišām recension. They include Ṣafwān, ‘Alī and Usāmah (the entire advice scene is missing). The person intimidating the maid is not identified as ‘Alī, but ‘one of his [scil. the Prophet’s] companions’. The name of the maid, Barīrah in the Zuhrī recension, is not mentioned; the different versions of Hišām ibn ‘Urwah’s recension describe her as Nubian (Ḥammād) or black (Yūnus ibn Bukayr) or simply as one of ‘Ā’iṣah’s servants (Abū Usāmah). In the context of the conflict between the Banū l-Aws and the Banū l-Ḥazraġ, only the first speaker, Sa’d ibn Mu‘āḍ, is named; the other two, Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah and Usayd ibn ‘Ḥudayr, are not known to Hišām ibn ‘Urwah.

In addition, all Hišām ibn ‘Urwah versions share the motif of ‘Ā’iṣah finding her father at home, praying on the rooftop (Ḥammād and Yūnus ibn Bukayr) or reciting the Qur’ān (Abū Usāmah) and the maid’s statement, ‘I only know about ‘Ā’iṣah what the goldsmith knows about the choicest gold’. A final characteristic of the recension seems to be that, during her nightly walk and her conversation with ‘Ā’iṣah, Umm Miṣṭaḥ stumbles several times (not once only, as az-Zuhrī reports) and curses her son several times. This repetition, however, was (later?) deleted from several sub-versions of the two main versions.

3.5c Three versions: Ḥammād ibn Salamah, Abū Usāmah, Yūnus ibn Bukayr

Compared to the different versions of the Zuhri recension, the degree of variation between the three Hišām ibn ‘Urwah versions is noticeably higher.¹³⁹ Yet, differences generally only affect the sequence of motifs, their degree of elaboration and the choice of words. The motifs themselves are almost identical throughout. Here and there, we find reductions in the motif stock: Yūnus ibn Bukayr’s version lacks the list of culprits (11), the Zaynab motif (10) and ‘Ā’iṣah’s remark on the future fate of her companion (7b).¹⁴⁰ Ḥammād ibn Salamah also does not have the Zaynab motif (10). He has, on the other hand, an addition not found in the other versions: a conciliatory remark by ‘Ā’iṣah about Ḥassān ibn Tābit, one of the slanderers.

The sequence of motifs according to Ḥammād is as follows: (1a)¹⁴¹–6–1b–2–11–3–4–5–8–9–7–12, Yūnus ibn Bukayr’s version has 6–1–2–3–4–5–8–9–7–12. Thus, contrary to Abū Usāmah, both Ḥammād and Yūnus ibn Bukayr place the motif of the maid’s questioning (6) at the beginning of the text.¹⁴² The extant Abū Usāmah texts, however, are not consistent in their sequence. One group (discussed above, p. 100ff.: Abū Usāmah in al-Buḥārī, at-Tirmidī and also at-Ṭabarānī)¹⁴³ place the questioning of the maid (6) and the statement by ‘Ā’iṣah’s companion (7) *before* Muḥammad’s call on his wife to repent (8) and the revelation of *sūrah* 24: 11 (9). In the other group (Abū Usāmah in Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and at-Ṭabarī), the sequence is reversed (8–9–6–7),¹⁴⁴ so that we arrive at an arrangement which is closer to that of the Ḥammād and Yūnus ibn Bukayr version (8–9–7).

Except for the absences of motifs mentioned above,¹⁴⁵ Yūnus ibn Bukayr’s report is at times somewhat more detailed than Ḥammād’s in its choice of words and the elaboration of certain narrative elements. Ḥammād does not have whole sections such as Umm Rūmān consoling her daughter (‘beautiful wives are always the target of the envy of co-wives’) and does not mention the slave accompanying ‘Ā’iṣah to her parents’ house. The fact that these elements of Yūnus’ version also appear in Abū Usāmah’s version demonstrates that they belonged to the original text stock of Hišām ibn ‘Urwah’s recension.

The texts of Abū Usāmah and Yūnus ibn Bukayr resemble each other most closely in their wording.

3.5d ‘Urwah’s letter to ‘Abd al-Malik: Another version of the Hišām ibn ‘Urwah recension

Finally, we have to discuss a letter ‘Urwah sent to the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik on the subject of the slander affair.¹⁴⁶ The letter was also transmitted via Hišām ibn ‘Urwah,¹⁴⁷ Hišām’s transmitter was Abān ibn Yazīd al-‘Aṭṭār.¹⁴⁸ Thus, it is another version of the Hišām recension after all. The letter can be found in at-Ṭabarī’s *Tafsīr*,¹⁴⁹ quoted as the first tradition in the context of his interpretation of *sūrah* 24: 11.¹⁵⁰ The text is very short.¹⁵¹ ‘Urwah merely answers the question of the caliph about the identity of the small group of people ‘who brought forward the

lie' (*sūrah* 24: 11). He lists Ḥassān ibn Tābit, Miṣṭaḥ and Ḥamnah. Strangely, the name of 'Abdallāh ibn Ubayy is absent from the list.

This is evocative of a similar episode which took place a generation later. The caliph al-Walīd, son of 'Abd al-Malik, is said to have asked az-Zuhrī a similar question, namely 'who took the lead among them' (scil. in the slander affair) while at the same time suggesting that 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was this person. Az-Zuhrī is said to have dismissed this allegation in no uncertain terms and, on the authority of his informants 'Urwah, Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab, 'Alqamah and 'Ubayd Allāh, identified 'Abdallāh ibn Ubayy as the main culprit.¹⁵² Perhaps, 'Abd al-Malik's letter to 'Urwah was written with the same intention in mind; conspicuously, 'Urwah emphasized in his reply that his sources did not name anyone else.

For our purpose, it remains to be seen why 'Urwah did not include 'Abdallāh ibn Ubayy in the list of culprits in his letter while accusing him of being the ring-leader of the slanderers in the Abū Usāmah version. The sentence in question takes on different guises in the Hišām ibn 'Urwah recension: in the Ḥammād ibn Salamah version, we read:

Among those bearing the brunt of the blame were Ḥassān ibn Tābit, Miṣṭaḥ ibn Uṭāyah and Ḥamnah ibn Ḡaḥṣ. We know of the names of no others. It [scil. the affair] was discussed in the presence of 'Abdallāh ibn Ubayy; he [listened to it, distorted it even more and] then spread it.¹⁵³

This report agrees in its substance and even some turns of phrase with the text of the letter. There, however, the last sentence about 'Abdallāh ibn Ubayy is absent. Since the text of the letter was passed on in lecture courses, this sentence could have been lost in the process of transmission.

Excursus: A method to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic versions of a tradition

Before discussing one more (alleged) Hišām ibn 'Urwah version, a few remarks on method are in order. As we have seen, our corpus contains, among other material, two tradition complexes reported on the authority of 'Urwah which differ significantly in details, but agree in their general outline: the recensions of az-Zuhrī and Hišām ibn 'Urwah. Since these two recensions share a number of important characteristics (part of the motif stock and the elaboration of certain key motifs; to a certain degree also their arrangement), but also show a considerable amount of variation in the details (e.g. in their degree of elaboration and their wording); since this type of variation is only to be expected with the mode of transmission practised at the time (in the first century AH and frequently still in the second, material was presented from memory),¹⁵⁴ and finally, since we are dealing with two demonstrably independent transmissions, we have to assume, in the absence of convincing proof to the contrary, that these transmissions are genuine.

Conversely, we should be suspicious of the authenticity of those traditions in our corpus which display too high a degree of resemblance in motif stock,

characteristics, sequence and wording to the Zuhri and Hišām recensions without tracing them back to the corresponding transmitters, i.e. az-Zuhri or Hišām ibn ‘Urwah.

3.5e An inauthentic Hišām ibn ‘Urwah version

The principle just outlined proves to be quite helpful at this stage of our study: there is a version reported according to Hišām ibn ‘Urwah¹⁵⁵ and transmitted by one Abū Uways,¹⁵⁶ who is said to have been a student of az-Zuhri (!). It does not display even a single one of the characteristics of the Hišām recension but all of the important ones of the Zuhri recension. Similar to the latter, the tradition begins with the drawing of lots and contains the entire story of the loss of the necklace and many additional embellishments. Like az-Zuhri, Abū Uways reports the names of the people who remain anonymous in Hišām ibn ‘Urwah (Šafwān, ‘Alī, Usāmah, Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah, Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr). On the other hand, the tradition contains not a single of the characteristic traits listed for Hišām’s transmission above,¹⁵⁷ e.g. the maid’s statement: ‘I only know about ‘Ā’iṣah what the goldsmith knows about the the choicest gold’.

Therefore, we can safely say that this tradition is an inauthentic Hišām ibn ‘Urwah version: its originator, Abū Uways, took a Zuhri version, embellished it and added a false *isnād*.

3.6 The ‘purged’ ‘Urwah recension

What exactly did ‘Urwah himself report about the ‘Ā’iṣah scandal? We are now in a position to reconstruct the gist of his story by comparing the two recensions, one by az-Zuhri and one by Hišām, both traced back to ‘Urwah, but transmitted independently of each other. ‘Urwah’s lecture on the scandal must have contained at least the following motifs: ‘Ā’iṣah being apprized of the scandal by Umm Miṣṭah during her nightly walk to release herself; Muḥammad’s permission for ‘Ā’iṣah to return to her parents’ house; his questioning of a maid; his public speech; the subsequent conflict between the Banū l-Aws and the Banū l-Ḥazrağ; Muḥammad’s asking ‘Ā’iṣah to repent and her defence; the revelation of *sūrah* 24: 11; finally, Abū Bakr’s reaction against the slanderer Miṣṭah and the revelation of *sūrah* 24: 22.

It is unclear whether ‘Urwah knew and transmitted the initial part of the story, the loss of the necklace, a motif only reported by az-Zuhri, not by Hišām. If he did, we would have to assume that, for whatever reason, Hišām discarded it while az-Zuhri preserved it. If he did not, az-Zuhri would have extracted the initial part missing in ‘Urwah’s story from a report from one or more of his three other informants. Our corpus contains one report traced back to one of them, ‘Alqamah ibn Waqqāṣ ‘and others’.¹⁵⁸ However, it also lacks the initial part.¹⁵⁹ We also have to consider the possibility that ‘Urwah related the story in different forms on different occasions, sometimes including the initial part, sometimes omitting it. Due to the considerable differences between the transmitted recensions, we are not in a position to reconstruct verbatim the original form(s) of his tradition. Only for short passages, primarily some speeches, can such a reconstruction be attempted.

One such passage is Umm Rūmān's consolation speech to her daughter, reported in a very similar form in both the Zuhrī and Hišām recensions:

Az-Zuhrī on the authority of 'Urwah (in 'Abd ar-Razzāq): *ay bunayyah hawwīnī 'alay-ki fa-wa-llāh la-qalla-mā kānat imra'ah qaṭṭu wāḍī'atan 'inda rağul yuḥibbu-hā wa-la-hā ḍarā'ir illā aktarna 'alay-hā*¹⁶⁰

My little daughter, don't get excited! It is rarely the case, by God, that a chaste woman, living with a man who loves her and who has several co-wives is not the object of their attention.

Hišām ibn 'Urwah on the authority of 'Urwah (in al-Buḥārī): *yā bunayyah ḥaffīḍī 'alay-ki š-ša'n fa-inna-hū wa-llāh la-qalla-mā kānat imra'ah qaṭṭu ḥasnā' 'inda rağul yuḥibbu-hā la-hā ḍarā'ir illā ḥasadna-hā wa-qīla fī-hā*¹⁶¹

My daughter, take it easy! It is rarely the case, by God, that a beautiful woman, living with a man who loves her and who has several co-wives, is not the object of their envy and gossip.

Without a doubt, we have here, in parts even in its very wording, the original tradition of 'Urwah! Another such passage is 'Ā'īṣah's speech in defence of herself to the Prophet, where we find several literal matches in both recensions.

3.7 Is 'Ā'īṣah the original informant?

Did 'Urwah receive most of his material from his aunt 'Ā'īṣah, as he claims? In the case of the scandal story, this is very likely: why would 'Ā'īṣah not have talked to her nephew about an incident which concerned her personally to such a degree? If, contrary to expectation, it was not 'Ā'īṣah herself, but somebody else who informed 'Urwah about the incident, there is a good chance that this person would have been a contemporary of the events. Thus, 'Urwah's account of the scandal story is at least a contemporary report, i.e. 'oral history', if not an eyewitness report.

In any case, it has become clear that in the second half of the first century AH, 'Urwah created a redaction of the story with a strongly apologetic slant in favour of the protagonist, a close relative of his. He then transmitted the report to (at least) two students, az-Zuhrī and his son Hišām.¹⁶² Both transmitters gave the story their very own characteristic shape, in which it was, *via* further transmitters and with certain modifications, handed down to the compilers of the canonical *ḥadīṭ* collections, the historian aṭ-Ṭabarī and many others.

3.8 Inauthentic and problematic imitations of the main recensions

The 'main recensions' discussed so far, i.e. those of Hišām ibn 'Urwah, az-Zuhrī, Ibn Iṣḥāq and al-Wāqīdī, can be said to belong to one family: they are derived, at least in large part, from the same source, 'Urwah.

Keeping in mind the individual characteristics of these recensions frequently allows us to spot false ascriptions, falsified *isnāds* and invented material.¹⁶³ Several allegedly independent recensions can now be identified as ‘embellished’, sometimes forged imitations (based mostly on the Zuhri recension).¹⁶⁴

- 1 The Abū Uways version,¹⁶⁵ an alleged transmission of the Hišām recension, but in fact a paraphrased and somewhat extended Zuhri version.
- 2 A tradition¹⁶⁶ traced back to ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar (d. 73/692–3)¹⁶⁷ with the following *isnād*: ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ḥallād ad-Dawraqī < Sa‘dān ibn Zakarīyā’ ad-Dawraqī < Ismā‘īl ibn Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abdallāh at-Taymī¹⁶⁸ < [Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān] Ibn Abī Dī‘b (d. 158/774–5 or the following year)¹⁶⁹ < Nāfi‘ [Mawlā Ibn ‘Umar] (d. 117/735 or a few years later)¹⁷⁰ < Ibn ‘Umar. It is in fact an extensively ‘enhanced’ Zuhri version (it begins with the drawing of lots) sharing many secondary motifs with the Muwaqqarī version.¹⁷¹ With the version of Abū Hurayrah (no. 5) and the exegetical comments of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (no. 7), it shares the motif that Safwān ibn al-Mu‘aṭṭal used to linger in the camp after the army’s departure and to collect lost items and restore them to their owners (a rational explanation of why Ṣafwān remained in the camp!).
- 3 A tradition¹⁷² ascribed to ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687–8 or a year later)¹⁷³ with the following *isnād*: Salamah ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Yaḥyā ibn Salamah ibn Kahīl < his father (Ibrāhīm) < his father Ismā‘īl ibn Yaḥyā ibn Salamah ibn Kahīl¹⁷⁴ < his grandfather Salamah ibn Kahīl (d. 122/739–40 or a year later)¹⁷⁵ < al-Ḥasan al-‘Arabī < Ibn ‘Abbās. Overall, an abridged Zuhri version (it also begins with the drawing of lots) with one added characteristic from another *ifk* recension (the fainting motif).¹⁷⁶
- 4 A tradition¹⁷⁷ reported on the authority of al-Aswad ibn Yazīd (d. 74/693–4 or a year later),¹⁷⁸ transmitted by ‘Abdān ibn Aḥmad < Zayd ibn al-Ḥurayṣ < ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Muḥāribī (d. 195/810–11)¹⁷⁹ < Abū Sa‘d ibn al-Baqqāl (d. after 140/757–8)¹⁸⁰ < ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn al-Aswad (d. 99/717–18 or a year later)¹⁸¹ < al-Aswad. It combines motifs from a completely unrelated complex of traditions (‘Ā‘iṣah’s early marriage) with an abridged Zuhri version with various additional motifs.¹⁸²
- 5 A tradition¹⁸³ ascribed to Abū Hurayrah with the following *isnād*: ‘Amr ibn Ḥalīfah al-Bakrāwī¹⁸⁴ < Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr¹⁸⁵ < Abū Salamah ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. 94/712–13 or ten years later)¹⁸⁶ < Abū Hurayrah. It is close to the Zuhri recension (it begins with the drawing of lots), but shares with the Ibn Iṣḥāq recension the chronological link between the *ifk* episode and the raid against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq. On the other hand, it shares with the version of Ibn ‘Umar (no. 2) and the exegetical comments of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (no. 7) the motif that Safwān ibn al-Mu‘aṭṭal used to linger in the camp after the army’s departure and to collect lost items and restore them to their owners.

For three further traditions, I am not sure whether they depend on az-Zuhri and/or Hišām or are independent. In the case of the first two examples listed below, the

former possibility seems more likely, since their respective motif stock hardly goes beyond that of the two main recensions:

- 6 A tradition in aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁸⁷ and reported on the authority of ‘Alqamah ibn Waqqāṣ.¹⁸⁸ Its *isnād*: Sufyān ibn Wakī (d. 247/861)¹⁸⁹ < Muḥammad ibn Biṣr (d. 203/818–19)¹⁹⁰ < Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Alqamah¹⁹¹ < Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Ḥaṭīb (d. 104/722–3)¹⁹² < ‘Alqamah ibn Waqqāṣ and others.¹⁹³ The tradition shares the range of reported events – excluding the entire prelude with the loss of the necklace – and other motifs with Hišām ibn ‘Urwah, but at the same time contains other motifs and traits typical for az-Zuhrī, e.g. several personal names unknown to Hišām. One noteworthy difference between this tradition and the two main recensions is the statement of the maid (here, she is ‘Abyssinian’ instead of ‘Nubian’, or ‘black’, as Hišām reports) about ‘Ā’iṣah: ‘Ā’iṣah is finer than the finest gold’ (*la-‘Ā’iṣah aṭyab min ṭayyib aḍ-ḍahab*). Such a statement is absent from az-Zuhrī’s text, while Hišām’s differs in its choice of words.¹⁹⁴ I assume that the author of this tradition formulated it on the basis of the Hišām recension but was also familiar with the Zuhrī recension. Incidentally, the original informants mentioned in the *isnād*, ‘Alqamah ibn Waqqāṣ and others, remind us of az-Zuhrī’s ascription (‘Alqamah + ‘Urwah etc.).
- 7 The exegetical comments on *‘uṣbatun min-kum* (*sūrah* 24:11)¹⁹⁵ in the Qur’ān commentary of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 150/767).¹⁹⁶ Without citing a chain of authorities, Muqātil relates the events *before* the return of ‘Ā’iṣah and the army to Medina. If at all, he could therefore only draw his material from one of the two main recensions, that of az-Zuhrī. Ignoring the abridgements – one element which did not survive is ‘Ā’iṣah’s justification for her losing the necklace (mentioning ‘Ā’iṣah’s need to relieve herself might have struck the redactor as indecent)¹⁹⁷ – the version in general strongly resembles that of az-Zuhrī. But we also find an additional motif: about Ṣafwān ibn al-Mu‘aṭṭal, we learn that he used to linger in the camp after the army’s departure to collect lost items and restore them to their owners. This motif, undoubtedly developed as a rational explanation why Ṣafwān remained in the camp, can also be found in the Ibn ‘Umar tradition and in the Abū Hurayrah tradition (cf. above, no. 2 and no. 5).¹⁹⁸ Since Muqātil does not adduce an *isnād*, the relation between the three reports remains unclear.
- 8 A tradition extant in two versions, one¹⁹⁹ with the *isnād* ‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb (d. 197/812)²⁰⁰ < ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam (d. 182/798)²⁰¹ < Zayd ibn Aslam (d. 136/753),²⁰² the other, a substantially different version,²⁰³ reported on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Zayd ibn Aslam < [Zayd ibn Aslam? <] Ibn Sa’d ibn Raḥah (?). It relates Muḥammad’s *ḥuṭbah*, which here takes place *after* the revelation,²⁰⁴ and the subsequent conflict between the Banū l-Aws and Banū l-Ḥazraġ. Like az-Zuhrī (and unlike Hišām ibn ‘Urwah), the transmitter knows Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah and Usayd ibn Ḥuḍayr in addition to Sa’d ibn Mu‘āḍ; furthermore, he reports the statements of a fourth person, Muḥammad ibn Salamah. The characteristic trait of both versions of

the tradition, however, is a new motif: the conflict between the two tribes is settled through the revelation of *sūrah* 4: 88: ‘How is it with you, that you are two parties touching the hypocrites, and God has overthrown them for what they earned?’²⁰⁵

3.9 The Ḥuṣayn recension: An independent transmission?

Finally, we will look at a recension of the story which probably emerged independently of the recensions of the ‘Urwah ‘family’. Parallels and differences between these transmissions about the same incident can provide additional findings on the nature and authenticity of early Islamic historical transmission.

3.9a One version in translation

The *ḥadīṭ* is quoted in, among others, al-Buḥārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* (several times and in different transmissions)²⁰⁶ and the *Musnads* of aṭ-Ṭayālis²⁰⁷ and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.²⁰⁸ Thus, Muslim *ḥadīṭ* scholars regarded it as ‘sound’. This is the literal translation of one of the Buḥārī versions:

(*isnād*: al-Buḥārī < Mūsā ibn Ismā‘īl [d. 229/837–8]²⁰⁹ < Abū ‘Awānah²¹⁰ < Ḥuṣayn ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān [d. 136/753–4]²¹¹ < Abū Wā‘il²¹² < Masrūq ibn al-Aḡda‘ [d. 63/682–3]²¹³ < Umm Rūmān, ‘Ā’iṣah’s mother:) ‘While I sat together with ‘Ā’iṣah, a woman of the Anṣār entered and said: “May God do to X this and to Y that!” Umm Rūmān asked: “What are you talking about?” – She (the Anṣār woman) answered: “My son is one of those who spread the story.” – She (Umm Rūmān) asked again: “What are you talking about?” – She (the Anṣār woman) answered: “This and that” – ‘Ā’iṣah then said: “Has the Messenger of God heard this yet?” – She (the Anṣār woman) answered: “Yes.” – “And Abū Bakr?” – “Yes (he too).” – Thereupon, she [scil. ‘Ā’iṣah] fainted. When she recovered, fever took her with violent trembling. I threw a cloak over her and covered her with it. Then, the Prophet arrived and asked: “What is wrong with that (woman)?” I answered: ‘O Messenger of God, a fever has taken hold of her.’ He replied: “Perhaps because of the story people tell?” – She said: “Yes.” Then, ‘Ā’iṣah sat up and said: “By God, if I swear (that I did not do it), you will not believe me and if I admit it, you will not pardon me. You and I are like Jacob and his sons: ‘And God’s succour is ever there to seek against that which you describe (and which is not true).’”²¹⁴ – She [scil. Umm Rūmān] continued her report: ‘He then left and said nothing. God revealed her innocence. Thereupon, ‘Ā’iṣah said: “Praise be to God, but not to anybody else and (certainly) not to you (Muḥammad)!”’²¹⁵

3.9b Origin and transmission

As Muslim *ḥadīṭ* scholars correctly pointed out, the common link in the *isnād* of this tradition is Ḥuṣayn ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Sulamī, a traditionist from Kūfah

or Wāsiṭ.²¹⁶ They also noticed the fact that the *isnād* is defective.²¹⁷ Masrūq is said to have been born after the death of Umm Rūmān, the mother of ‘Ā’iṣah. The defectiveness of the *isnād* is significant, because it makes conscious forgery highly unlikely. We still cannot tell if it is correct on the strength of this observation; Ḥuṣayn marks the chronological limit of our analysis. Nevertheless, it will be shown on the basis of internal criteria that the tradition is probably authentic.

But first, some remarks on its subsequent transmission. The extant versions vary little in motif stock, elaboration and sequence; this is not surprising given the brevity of the tradition. Yet, one of the versions, that quoted by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (‘Alī ibn ‘Āṣim < Ḥuṣayn), is somewhat longer. At the end, it contains the motif of Abū Bakr’s oath to withdraw his support from Miṣṭaḥ (here unnamed) and the following revelation of *sūrah* 24: 22.²¹⁸

Like Hišām ibn ‘Urwah (but unlike az-Zuhrī) the common link, Ḥuṣayn, was not able to establish a more or less ‘stable’, fixed text of his tradition, because the extant versions vary substantially. Not even in the generation after Ḥuṣayn did the tradition receive its final form: the texts of aṭ-Ṭayālīsī and al-Buḥārī, who both transmit the *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū ‘Awānah < Ḥuṣayn, vary considerably in length and wording.²¹⁹ The most exact matches are, once again, in sections reporting direct speech.

Again, we observe that we cannot generalize our findings about the, as it were, verbatim transmission of passages of Zuhri traditions to cover the entire field of contemporary transmission practices. Other scholars of his generation such as Hišām ibn ‘Urwah, Abū Ishāq as-Sabīṭī and Ḥuṣayn apparently still lectured from memory and/or presented different versions of their traditions on different occasions. This conclusion is echoed by Muslim biographical works, which frequently remark on az-Zuhrī’s habit of assiduously writing everything down, whereas they remain silent on whatever written records Hišām ibn ‘Urwah might have produced. Finally, until the third/ninth century, the written transmission of *ḥadīths* was still frowned on in Kūfah, where Ḥuṣayn taught. Even a *muṣannif* such as Wakīf ibn al-Ġarrāḥ (d. 812)²²⁰ is said not to have possessed a book.²²¹

3.9c Text features – motif stock

In some characteristic details, Ḥuṣayn’s recension of the story differs from the versions ultimately based on ‘Urwah’s text. Its motif stock is even smaller than that of the Hišām ibn ‘Urwah recension. Except for the revelation itself, the events take place exclusively in ‘Ā’iṣah’s home (i.e. in the house of of Muḥammad or Abū Bakr?). This also applies to ‘Ā’iṣah finding out about the scandal with the help of an (anonymous) ‘woman of the Anṣār’. (The transmitter knows neither the name of Umm Miṣṭaḥ nor that of her son: a strong indicator for the fact that he was not familiar with the Zuhri recension!) Since ‘Ā’iṣah learns about the scandal in her home, the motif of her nightly walk to relieve herself is absent. Often, the description is organized on the lines of scenes: the flow of events proceeds largely by way of dialogue.

A new motif of this version is ‘Ā’iṣah’s fainting fit after hearing about the scandal and being covered with a cloak by her mother. It is the characteristic motif of

this recension. Lastly, the revelation takes place not in the presence of ‘Ā’iṣah and her family, but at an unspecified location, apparently outside the house.

Besides these differences, there are several elements this recension shares with those ultimately going back to ‘Urwah and az-Zuhrī. They pertain to the two central motifs of the story: the slander and the revelation. They also include ‘Ā’iṣah’s clever speech in her own defence (here culminating with her quote from the Joseph *sūrah*) and her defiant statement against Muḥammad after the revelation (here in an even bolder formulation than in the other recensions!) A motif shared by this recension and that of Hiṣām ibn ‘Urwah and absent from the Zuhrī recension is ‘Ā’iṣah’s question, immediately after she finds out about the scandal, whether Muḥammad and Abū Bakr already know. Finally, Ḥuṣayn’s tradition seems to presuppose some knowledge about the incident on the part of his audience (‘She answered: “This and that”’).

Thus, in all probability, this recension is an independent transmission of the story – irrespective of whether it ultimately originated with Umm Rūmān or not. The fact that it does not match or sometimes apparently attempts to correct the other recensions may in fact be an indicator for its independence and authenticity.

In our tradition complex, *tampering with* the story (which is, after all, historical) is achieved by means of extension, addition of (partly) fantastic embellishments or by supplementing it with secondary elements, mixing several extant versions, rather than through manipulation of the main motifs. This will be illustrated with the help of another example below.

3.9d Inauthentic imitations of the Ḥuṣayn recension

Our corpus contains two more traditions which report ‘Ā’iṣah’s fainting fit after finding out about the scandal. The common link of one of these *ḥadīths*²²² is ‘Attāb ibn Baṣīr (d. 190/805–6 or slightly earlier),²²³ one generation after Ḥuṣayn, who reports on the authority of Ḥuṣayf ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān (d. 136/753–4 or slightly later)²²⁴ < Miqṣam (d. 101/719–20)²²⁵ < ‘Ā’iṣah. In this case, we will quote Muslim *ḥadīṭ* criticism, which happens to comment on this tradition. Ibn ‘Adī writes:

This ‘Attāb ibn Baṣīr transmitted a notebook (*nushah*) from Ḥuṣayf. In that notebook, there were ‘unacknowledged’ (i.e. objectionable) traditions and texts, including the tradition (about the story) of the lie (*ḥadīṭ al-ifk*), which he transmitted on the authority of Ḥuṣayf from Miqṣam from ‘Ā’iṣah. He added formulations (*alfāẓan*), which no one else passed on except ‘Attāb, on the authority of Ḥuṣayf ...²²⁶

This last observation is absolutely correct: the tradition contains a number of speeches, expressions and (unimportant) details not found anywhere else in our corpus. A few examples: Umm Miṣṭah trips over a ‘bone or thorn’ and she asks ‘Ā’iṣah: ‘When was the last time the Messenger of God “recognized” you?’. ‘Ā’iṣah replies: ‘The Messenger of God treats his wives as he sees fit.’ Abū Bakr says to the Prophet: ‘What do you intend (to do) with this (woman), now that she

has deceived you and compromised me?’ The first thing the Prophet says to Barīrah is: ‘Do you testify that I am the Messenger of God?’

More important is the fact – unnoticed by Ibn ‘Adī – that ‘Attāb apparently contaminated and harmonized two versions of the story: when he inserts the fainting fit motif from Ḥuṣayn into the Zuhūrī recension he is, for the most part, imitating and adapting the motif to its new narrative framework. As in the Ḥuṣayn recension, ‘Ā’īṣah faints after finding out about the scandal (*fa-ḥarartu mağšīyan ‘alayya*, I fell to the ground in a faint; cf. *fa-ḥarartu mağšīyan ‘alay-hā*, she fell to the ground in a faint, in the Ḥuṣayn version), but, as in az-Zuhūrī, she learns about the scandal outside the house on her way to relieve herself, where she meets Umm Miṣṭaḥ, who is named in this version. Thus, Umm Rūmān has to hear about the accident (*fa-balaḡa amrī ummī*, my mother heard about what had happened to me), before she hurries to her daughter’s side and carries her into her (i.e. Abū Bakr’s) house – an exceedingly artificial and unlikely scenario.

If we ignore the absence of the beginning of the story and the additions outlined above, we find that the remaining motifs (Muḥammad exhorts ‘Ā’īṣah; he sends for ‘Alī and Barīrah; Barīrah’s testimony regarding ‘Ā’īṣah turns out to be positive; he queries Usāmah; revelation of *sūrah* 24:11; ‘Ā’īṣah’s defiant reaction, here slightly attenuated) generally match those of the Zuhūrī recension. Conspicuously, ‘Attāb at the end (echoing az-Zuhūrī’s text verbatim) adds the following remark: ‘And when he came to her, he used to say: “How is that (woman) there?”’

The other tradition containing the fainting fit²²⁷ is reported on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās.²²⁸ Except for the fainting fit motif, which was in all likelihood derived from Ḥuṣayn, it is modelled after the Zuhūrī recension.²²⁹

3.10 Authentic and inauthentic traditions

Authentic²³⁰ and inauthentic traditions (i.e. those which were consciously tampered with, embellished, falsely ascribed and/or contaminated) can very often be distinguished through comparison on the basis of a complete corpus.²³¹ Contradictions between several transmitted versions, however, are *not* necessarily evidence against their authenticity (as defined above): our experience tells us that – without having to consult the systematic findings of research in the fields of folk narration and oral tradition – a report on an event which was transmitted by various people over two or more generations takes on different forms according to the interpretations and personal concerns of its transmitters. Oral tradition research explains this phenomenon as follows: ‘Memory typically selects certain features from the successive perceptions and interprets them according to expectations, previous knowledge, or the logic of “what must have happened,” and fills the gaps in perception.’²³²

The more transmitters are involved in passing on a ‘message’ (i.e. a report about an event), the stronger this effect will be: *topoi* emerge. These can even develop during the first generation of transmitters: folk tale research has shown that

even eye- and earwitness reports [‘oral history’] have a tendency to impose on events certain traditional motifs [= *topoi*] and narrative conventions which conform to the expectations of the audience, i.e. to re-shape real events in accordance with oral traditions ...²³³

Thus, even in the case of authentic traditions, we should not expect to have objective reports on actual events. What we have are ‘memories’ at best, if not actually ‘memories of memories’.

There is no reason, however, to be too sceptical regarding the events narrated in the traditions. In the case discussed above, we have no reason to doubt the outlines of the ‘Ā’iṣah story, even though – or rather because – they have been transmitted in very different forms. As Vansina writes, ‘recent oral tradition – one or two generations beyond the oldest living members in a community – suffers only small damage’.²³⁴

In addition, some traits or anecdotes run counter to the customary pattern (‘Ā’iṣah as the ‘mother of the believers’). According to Vansina, these very elements and anecdotes should be trusted: ‘When, however, traits or anecdotes run counter to fashion, they should be seen as reliable. These data resisted the trend to idealization’.²³⁵

The earliest Muslim collectors of historical reports, the generation of ‘Urwah and the one following it, seem to have been aware of the fact that what they received were not objective reports about actual events, but rather (often inconsistent) ‘memories of memories’. We know this for certain about later compilers and historians, e.g. al-Buḥārī, who often assembled several traditions about one and the same event in his compilation entitled *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ‘The Authentic’, even though they contradict each other in some details. One example is the ‘Ā’iṣah story we have analysed above: the *Ṣaḥīḥ* includes the versions of az-Zuhrī, Hiṣām ibn ‘Urwah and Ḥuṣayn. Aṭ-Ṭabarī went even further: he indiscriminately collected whatever material he could find (except, of course, such traditions he regarded as absolutely false).

We are now in a position to assess the theories of Crone/Cook and Noth. Crone and Cook rightly stressed the inconsistencies affecting early Islamic historical transmission: chronology is often contradictory and cannot be conclusively reconstructed; events reported by historians which date back to a too distant past (e.g. events a long time before the *hiğrah* such as the revelation experience, and especially those antedating Muḥammad’s birth) cannot be automatically accepted as historical facts; specific, sometimes apparently important elements in accounts of historical events cannot have happened as reported. All these points are of course extremely important. ‘Conservative’ historiographers, including Watt (to name only one of the most prominent exponents), often treated the material in an overly credulous manner.

Still, we cannot dismiss out of hand the entire body of Islamic historiography about the first century AH as inauthentic and therefore worthless for modern research.²³⁶ In this study, we have tested a method which often allows us to shorten the time span of around two centuries between an event and our available historical sources by half or reduce it even further. We are almost always in a position to

reconstruct with some certainty Ibn Ishāq's (d. 150/767) redaction on the basis of the Ibn Ishāq recensions transmitted by Ibn Hišām (d. c. 218/834), aṭ-Ṭabarī and others. Often enough, we can go back one more generation to az-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), Hišām ibn 'Urwah (d. 146/763) and other contemporary scholars. Whenever they *independently* (this is a necessary condition!) transmit a report from an authority a generation earlier – e.g. 'Urwah – we can even reconstruct the gist of this report by comparing its different versions (which often vary substantially in their details). Thus, we have advanced backwards into the second half of the first century AH, the beginning of the collection activities of Muslim scholars. It is therefore wrong to claim that we cannot step over the 'magical threshold' of the first century AH.²³⁷

Once we have reconstructed the report of the earliest collector, we should remember that the material does not represent objective descriptions of actual events, but only 'oral tradition' or, at best, 'oral history'. As we know from folk tale and oral tradition research, such reports contain alterations, biases, *topoi*. Noth deserves due credit for being the first scholar to recognize the importance of this fact for the field of early Islamic historiography – purely by analysing and interpreting the sources and without the help of the results provided by recent research in the disciplines mentioned above.

Further 'purification' of the report, this time from *topoi*, bias, stylizations, etc., may be necessary to arrive at a text that is closer to the 'truth'. On the basis of such a 'purified' report from the earliest securely identifiable transmitter, we are able to spot further unsuspecting traditions through comparisons within our corpus.

For 'purified traditions' of a collector (and its parallel traditions) reporting events dating back several (three or more) generations, we have to leave the question of the historicity of these events unanswered without additional evidence from other sources. In such a case, the contents of the tradition should be treated as a *hypothesis*.

Should, on the other hand, such a tradition (and its parallels) be concerned with an event dating back only one or two generations – for example this applies to many of the major events of Muḥammad's Medinese period – we can as a rule assume that the report correctly reflects at least the main outlines of the event.

3.11 Summary

What exactly are the results of our study for our knowledge of the early Islamic transmission system, its nature and its authenticity?

- 1 By the second half of the first century AH, scholars such as 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr started systematically to collect reports about major events of early Islam. Even though the use of writing was still controversial in the first two centuries AH – some scholars wanted to restrict it to the Qur'ān alone – they often possessed written records to aid their memories. The material these scholars assembled and passed on to their students in lectures (as a rule from memory) consisted of – to use the terminology of recent oral tradition research – *oral traditions* on the one hand, and also of reports of *oral history*

(accounts by contemporaries of an event) on the other. Thus, these early collectors received information which was not objective, but rather interpreted in the light of and coloured by the personal concerns of one or more successive informants.²³⁸ From our own daily experience, we know that '[m]emory typically selects certain features from the successive perceptions and interprets them according to expectation, previous knowledge, or the logic of "what must have happened," and fills the gaps in perception'.²³⁹ Research into oral tradition has systematically analysed this common experience. Therefore, reports about events which in themselves are historical often contain elements and motifs which did not take place as stated or can be identified as *topoi*.

- 2 Normally, however, we have no reason to doubt the historicity of the *main outlines* of reports which emerged one to two generations after the death of the oldest living members of a community at the time an event took place. In particular, this holds for reports of *contemporaries* which the early collectors were occasionally able to obtain ('oral history'), since, according to oral tradition research, 'recent oral tradition ... suffers only small damage'.²⁴⁰ To doubt the historicity of the main outlines of events reported in such traditions would be excessively sceptical. Thus, what 'Urwah and other 'historians' of his generations heard and transmitted about important events of early Islam – say, from the time of the first *hiğrah* to Abyssinia²⁴¹ – should roughly conform to historical facts, particularly in cases (such as the scandal about 'Ā'īṣah) when a story 'run[s] counter to fashion', the described events 'should be seen as reliable. These data resisted the trend to idealization'.²⁴²
- 3 According to what I have just said in point (1), it is only to be expected that reports of several different collectors about the same historical event differ to a greater or lesser extent in their description of *details*. These should not be ascribed to (conscious) forgery, but are most probably the result of defective memory, unintentional and unconscious alterations, introduction of bias, etc. on the part of their informants. Later historians were aware of this phenomenon; one way of dealing with it was simply to present different reports with contradictory details side by side (e.g. in al-Buḥārī and aṭ-Ṭabarī).
- 4 We do not have all these reports in the form transmitted by 'Urwah and his contemporaries. It took another one or two generations, i.e. until the second half of the second/eighth century, for them to assume roughly (but often not exactly) the form we know today. During this period, the modification process continued, but not in the same way and not as intensively as before: in addition to instances of *riwāyah bi-l-ma'nā* (transmission through sense) instead of *riwāyah bi-l-lafz* (verbatim transmission), these modifications are for the most part redactional in nature (rearrangements of motifs, abridgements, marked or unmarked additions). We are often in a position to reconstruct the contents of a tradition redacted and passed on by an early transmitter by comparing independently transmitted recensions. This new quality and slowing down of the modification process reflects changed transmission methods: the oral transmission practised *until* the first systematic collectors (e.g. from 'Ā'īṣah to 'Urwah) was supplanted by a kind of lecture

system, in which the use of writing as a mnemonic aid for students and teachers played an increasingly important role. The fact that az-Zuhrī's recensions of specific reports were less extensively modified in transmission than parallel traditions originating with his contemporaries (as-Sabīī, Hišām ibn 'Urwah, Ḥuṣayn ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān) simply shows that in az-Zuhrī's generation the impact of writing differed substantially from one member of this generation of transmitters to the next. This insight is borne out by the biographical literature, which abounds with remarks about az-Zuhrī's enthusiasm for writing down material (from a certain point in time on).

- 5 Even by the time of the generation of scholars flourishing before the second half of the second/eighth century (Ibn Iṣḥāq, Ma'mar), the modification process had not come to a halt. At this point, however, modifications generally become more marginal and minor: stylistic adaptations, the use of synonyms, abridgements (among them ones that introduced biases), etc. There are still cases of non-verbatim reproductions capturing only the meaning of a text. Again, the increased deceleration and new quality of the modification process reflect a change in transmission methods: compilers now produced elaborately arranged written works (*muṣannaḥāt*), dictated them to their students (like Ibn Iṣḥāq) or even handed out their manuscripts for copying. We can now already discern a 'literature', but not yet a literature for a wider circle of readers; rather, it was a 'literature of the school for the school'.
- 6 'Urwah's generation was only slightly (if at all) interested in chronology. This interest emerged with the next generation – az-Zuhrī is already said to have authored an annalistic work – and reached its climax with the generations of Ibn Iṣḥāq and al-Wāqidī. Their chronological framework almost never draws on transmitted information (traditions), but relies on their own reasoning; it is therefore often contradictory and in parts wrong.
- 7 The process of modification only stops with the historians of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries (Ibn Hišām, al-Wāqidī, al-Balāḍurī, aṭ-Ṭabarī). They edited and published the works and traditions they had received (e.g. in dictation courses) in book form (thus, they produced 'fixed texts'). The normal transmission of 'fixed texts' came to pass by way of copying manuscripts, and the only forms of modification which took place were variants typical of written transmission and redactional changes. The orality Islamic scholars still insisted on, and which was expressed e.g. in the terminology of introductory *isnāds* at the beginning of *ḥadīth* collections, historical and other works, related to 'heard/audited transmission' (*samā'*, *qirā'ah*).
- 8 At *any* stage of the transmission process, tampering, false ascriptions, fictitious references (*isnāds*), insertion of inauthentic material and other conscious alterations could occur. Detailed textual comparisons allow us to identify such interventions in the case of frequently and independently transmitted traditions. Thus, in a study of a tradition complex, it is not enough to pick a handful of versions of a tradition, e.g. the best-known ones. Rather, we have to assemble and analyse an exhaustive corpus of all available versions.

Afterword 2009

In this book, I have described and tested a procedure based – according to a postulate formulated by Noth – on the analysis of separate traditions. I combined the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis with Paret’s important discovery that the transmission line Ibn Ishāq < al-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah represents a genuinely *historical* teacher–student relationship rather than a fictitious line generated by ‘raising back’ *isnāds*.¹ In the introduction to this book, the procedure is described in detail;² in the fictitious dialogue below, it will again figure prominently. It has enabled us to identify and single out ‘good’ (Noth), i.e. ‘authentic, reliable’ traditions, among the *sīrah* material.³ In what follows, I would like to take up a number of issues that were raised in the reviews of the German original of this book.

1. Reviews of the first edition

Internationally, my study met with a largely positive reaction. Experts from the USA, Israel, Italy, France and Germany wrote substantial reviews.⁴ I wrote a detailed rejoinder in reaction to H. Berg’s negative, but polite and measured review, which (as was to be expected) criticized my book from the point of view of Crone’s sceptical ‘school’.⁵ I do not want to repeat the details of my counter-arguments, which can be found in my rejoinder; however, I would like to respond to the following claim made by Berg:

A more convincing strategy would have been to look at apparently related traditions and analyze their contents without recourse to their *isnāds*. If the contents displayed a consistent correlation with their *isnāds*, then at least some of the information contained in the *isnāds* might be authentic.⁶

First of all, Berg’s statement is correct: a consistent correlation between *isnāds* and *mutūn* (texts) is indeed a strong indicator for the *isnād*’s authenticity, a fact Andreas Görke has demonstrated in an important study.⁷

But Berg is apparently unaware that I, without of course being aware of his suggestion, began by following the very same procedure in my first case study, which dealt with the *iqra*’ narration: in the first stage, I compiled a (maximally comprehensive) *thematic* corpus (without taking *isnāds* into account) of traditions

reporting that an angel appeared to the Prophet and summoned him to recite the first revelation. In the second stage, I provisionally limited my analysis to traditions reported on the authority of al-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’īṣah. This limitation made sense not just because of the similarity of the *isnāds* but also of theme, motifs and, for some passages, even wording: traditions traced back to al-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah (< ‘Ā’īṣah) share certain characteristic motifs and verbal parallels, e.g. all of them begin with the phrase *awwal mā budī’a bi-hī* and agree that *sūrah* 96: 1–5 was the first revelation. No tradition with a different *isnād* describes this event in the same manner. In the third stage, I studied traditions about the same event which come with similar (but not identical) *isnāds* (Hišām ibn ‘Urwah < ‘Urwah; Abū I-Aswad Yafīm ‘Urwah < ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’īṣah etc.) and found that they correlated also in their contents with parts of the traditions of the first group. On this basis, I concluded that they – as the *isnād* indicates – derive from the same source. Finally, in the fourth stage, I analysed traditions with similar contents as those transmitted on the authority of al-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’īṣah (some of them so similar that they must have had the same source) but with a different *isnād*. This phenomenon was of course in need of explanation and I attempted to give one. As in the case of the *iqra’* narration, my examination of the scandal story also proceeded from a maximally comprehensive corpus of traditions dealing with the event, not only those with the *isnād* ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’īṣah. In fact, I not only anticipated Berg’s suggestion that I take the contents of the relevant traditions as my starting point; I applied this method in a much more sophisticated manner than he required.

In his review, Rubin put forward a serious objection to an aspect of my study of the *iqra’* episode.⁸ He noted that the tradition according to Hišām ibn ‘Urwah (specifically the only known version at the time, Tradition 1)⁹ merely provides reports about Muḥammad’s visions (‘light’) and auditory sensations (‘voices’) and his fear of being a *kāhin* (followed by Ḥadiḡah’s praise and comforting words). It omits the actual revelation experience including the transmission of the first revelation – which al-Zuhrī identified as *sūrah* 96: 1–5, other transmitters as *sūrah* 1 – through an angel. Rubin infers from its absence that the version transmitted on the authority of Hišām ibn ‘Urwah (as well as another tradition with similar content traced back to ‘Ammār ibn Abī ‘Ammār < Ibn ‘Abbās¹⁰) preserves the original narration, in which the narrative motifs follow biblical rather than Qur’ānic conventions. He maintains that this original story, which was initially not connected with the Qur’ān, could only have been linked with the narration of the revelation of *sūrah* 96: 1–5 (in al-Zuhrī) or *sūrah* 1 (in other traditions) at a later stage. In the meantime, however, two more traditions traced back to Hišām ibn ‘Urwah have come to light, both of which correspond to other elements of the Zuhrī recension (which is, when compared to the Hišām recension, more elaborate): Ḥadiḡah narration II; Warāqah narration; appearance of the angel; identification of Nāmūs or Gabriel as the bearer of the first revelation[s]; *fatrah* narration.¹¹ This means that we now have proof that Hišām’s version did indeed contain some of the key figures and motifs of the Zuhrī version which Rubin claims as missing, especially the reference to Nāmūs or Gabriel as the bearer of the first revelation. On the other hand, we have to admit that we (still) cannot prove that Hišām regarded *sūrah* 96: 1–5 as the initial revelation.¹²

2. Subsequent research on the 'Urwah corpus

This book discusses two traditions transmitted on the authority of 'Urwah extant in at least two transmission lines that are *demonstrably independent of each other* (those of al-Zuhrī and Hišām ibn 'Urwah). We were able to show that by using 'Urwah traditions as a starting point, there is a very good chance of identifying 'good' traditions, i.e. traditions already circulating in the first century AH. Görke has carried on this work with his analysis of two more traditions reported on the authority of 'Urwah: one about the treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyah,¹³ the other (undertaken in cooperation with me) about the *hiğrah*.¹⁴ The findings of these two studies, both of which were published in English, confirm those of the preceding ones in all important respects. Also, in these two cases, on the basis of reports passed on by two or more 'Urwah transmitters (reports which differed in their particulars), we were invariably able to reconstruct the gist of the original 'Urwah tradition (or at least parts of it) from the material which they all had in common.

The crowning achievement of our work was a study of the complete corpus of *sīrah* traditions traced back to 'Urwah, supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation and undertaken with the help of another collaborator, lic. phil. Tanja Duncker. In addition to the events from the life of the Prophet listed above, this (recently published) study¹⁵ examines the following key events of early Islamic history transmitted on the authority of 'Urwah: the Battles of Badr and Uḥud and the Battle of the Trench (the latter including the raid against the Banū Qurayzah) and the conquest of Mecca. We were able to demonstrate conclusively for some of the traditions reporting these events, and with a very high degree of probability for others, that 'Urwah was their ultimate source. In other cases, the corpus allowed us to recognize and filter out doubtful material or material that was wrongly ascribed to him – e.g. through inadvertent mishaps in transmission or intentionally.¹⁶

The study confirmed an impression suggested by the findings of this book: that Hišām ibn 'Urwah and al-Zuhrī are 'Urwah's two most important and reliable transmitters.¹⁷ We can always demonstrate that their versions are independent of each other. With other transmitters of 'Urwah's traditions, especially Abū l-Aswad and Yazīd ibn Rūmān, we need to be more careful: their transmissions often rearrange and embellish 'Urwah's original reports, as we have seen in the case of their traditions about the first revelation experience. Often, elements of their traditions cannot unequivocally be traced back to 'Urwah.

'Urwah's report about the *hiğrah* turned out to be particularly well documented. We were even able to distinguish elements originating with 'Urwah but not reported on the authority of 'Ā'īshah from elements for which the latter is cited as the ultimate source.¹⁸ As with the scandal story discussed in this book, we can safely say that in other cases, too, 'Urwah reports the gist of 'Ā'īshah's own recollections. Even though 'Urwah's accounts of these events of early Islamic history are not eyewitness reports or contemporary reports, they are often based on such reports. By compiling and analysing the 'Urwah corpus, we have been able to reduce the 'gap in the historical tradition of early Islam'¹⁹ to a few decades.

3. A fictitious dialogue²⁰

THE SHAYKH: Dear Ṭālib, you rightly point out that the different recensions of Ibn Ishāq's *K. al-mağāzī* often display considerable textual variation.²¹ It is also true that Ibn Ishāq's students, transmitters and redactors frequently adapted and revised the material they received from their master. But, dear Ṭālib, I am sorry to say that your reasoning is flawed when you infer from all of this that we are unable to say anything definite about Ibn Ishāq's original text. By comparing the extant recensions, especially those of Ibn Hišām, al-Ṭabarī and Yūnus ibn Bukayr, we notice that the three authors largely parallel each other, often down to their very wording. Of course, we also frequently encounter textual differences, variants, omissions, rearrangements, perhaps even distortions. But consider our discussion of Ibn Ishāq's recension of the first revelation experience:²² we discovered that there was a single, largely uniform source text on which all three versions were based.

THE ṬĀLIB: Venerable Shaykh, I concede that to some extent, you are right. Patricia Crone's statement that '[Ibn Ishāq's] work survives only [!] in the recension of Ibn Hishām who died ... about 200 years after the Prophet. Consider the prospect of reconstructing the origins of Christianity on the basis of the writings of Clement or Justin Martyr in a recension by Origen'²³ is, in its first part, simply false; in the second, her parallel is inapplicable. The shared material of the different transmissions traced back to Ibn Ishāq must contain either all or parts of the material he put down in writing or disseminated through teaching. However, Master, consider this: Ibn Ishāq's account postdates the events it describes by a century or more.

THE SHAYKH: The rule you have just formulated, Ṭālib, allows us to go back two generations further. Bear in mind that many reports Ibn Ishāq cites on the authority of his most important teacher, al-Zuhrī, were also transmitted by other contemporary compilers, especially 'Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma'mar ibn Rāšid, Mūsā ibn 'Uqbah and Mālik ibn Anas – again on the authority of al-Zuhrī.²⁴ Even though the different versions of the same Zuhrī tradition transmitted by the three compilers often vary in their textual form and narrative details, we can always establish an intersection (shared material) which contains original Zuhrī material. As an aside, let me add that the existence of characteristic, divergent versions indicates that these traditions – in our case, those of al-Zuhrī – were passed on independently and through different lines of transmitters. But, whenever, in this early period, traditions transmitted by two or more students on the authority of the same teacher are overly similar, it seems likely that the students copied from each other and not that they have passed on their teacher's words. This is the phenomenon called the 'spread of traditions'.

THE ṬĀLIB: Shaykh, even though your explanation of the transmission of material from the generation of al-Zuhrī onwards has convinced me, we still have to account for a gap in transmission: al-Zuhrī died toward the middle of the second/eighth century. Even many sceptics would not deny that we can establish

some historical facts about figures and events of the second century. But by stepping back one more generation, we arrive in the first century. The ‘*imāms*’ of the sceptics all agree that we are unable to make any statements about this period.

THE SHAYKH: Ṭālib, remember that al-Zuhrī transmitted many important traditions, particularly those about historical events, from his teacher ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr. These traditions ...

THE ṬĀLIB: Excuse me for interrupting you – I assume that one could hardly prove that ‘Urwah was indeed the source for the material al-Zuhrī credits him with ...

THE SHAYKH: Indeed one can! There were other transmitters of ‘Urwah’s traditions besides al-Zuhrī, most prominently his son Hišām. For a large part of ‘Urwah’s historical (and legal) reports, we have versions from both of his main transmitters. It is true that they may display a considerable degree of variation. Yet, by establishing the intersection (the shared material) of an ‘Urwah tradition as transmitted by al-Zuhrī and Hišām ibn ‘Urwah ...

THE ṬĀLIB: ... we are in fact able to determine what ‘Urwah himself reported about an event! Your arguments have convinced me. But – there is still a gap of 30 years or more between the events and the lifetime of ‘Urwah, who was born about 20 years after the *hiğrah* (23/643–4 or a few years later) and probably did not start collecting and teaching traditions before 664. ‘Urwah was not an eye witness of any of the events he reports.

THE SHAYKH: Dear Ṭālib, you are of course absolutely right. ‘Urwah’s accounts do not reflect ‘the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth’. But consider this: as the son of a cousin of the Prophet and one of the earliest Muslim believers and as a nephew of Muḥammad’s wife ‘Ā’iṣah, ‘Urwah was in touch with people who were actual eye witnesses of the events of his life. His informants, all contemporaries of the Prophet, may have given him information that was sometimes subjective, sugar-coated, wrongly remembered or even unconsciously distorted. But it is unlikely to have been made up entirely out of thin air. And even though ‘Urwah’s reports may have been interpreted and coloured by his personality and selected by his memory, the process of selection and modification had not yet progressed too far. Most importantly, ‘Urwah also reports traits and stories which have resisted idealization. As an example, he relates that during the Battle of Uḥud, Muslim fighters also killed one of their own called al-Yamān who they mistook for an enemy fighter – even though his son called out to them that they were attacking his father.²⁵

THE ṬĀLIB: What, then, were the events of the Prophet’s life ‘Urwah reported about?

THE SHAYKH: He reported about all of the important events.

THE ṬĀLIB: Would it not be possible to reconstruct the outlines of a first-century biography of the Prophet on the basis of a comprehensive corpus of ‘Urwah traditions?

THE SHAYKH: Indeed it would.

THE ṬĀLIB: And would we not have to assume that the reports of this proto-*sīrah* were of a very different nature than later reports? Take the example of miracle stories: do they play a prominent role in ‘Urwah’s account?

THE SHAYKH: They do not – the earlier material contains hardly any miracle stories about Muḥammad. Let me give you an example: the difference between early and later reports comes out most strongly when we compare ‘Urwah’s account of the *hiḡrah* with one preserved in a Heidelberg papyrus fragment from the early third/ninth century ascribed to Wahb ibn Munabbih.²⁶ There is not a single miracle story in the former whereas the latter cites no fewer than five! Also, the picture of Muḥammad painted in ‘Urwah’s traditions has not yet been subjected to the sort of elevation we already notice in many of Ibn Ishāq’s reports (traced back to informants other than ‘Urwah). Take some other examples: consider the descriptions of the Battle of Badr, al-Ḥudaybīyah and the conquest of Mecca which we find in ‘Urwah’s letters to the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik and in his historical traditions.²⁷ There is no evidence whatsoever for the kind of development toward salvation history which Wansbrough claims to find in third-century sources – least of all in ‘Urwah’s account of the Battle of Uḡud in which he relates that Muslims inadvertently killed a fellow Muslim – what does that have to do with salvation history?

THE ṬĀLIB: Venerable Shaykh, let me ask you one last question. As we know, today’s Sunnī radical extremists view early Muslim society as it is described in Islamic historical tradition as an ideal and a model they strive to emulate. By abandoning Wansbrough’s revolutionary conclusion that early Islamic history is salvation history pure and simple without any historically valid core, are we not making a common cause with these Sunnī radicals? Do we not end up by supporting them?

THE SHAYKH: Not at all. It is absurd to equate the so-called (and falsely so, at that) ‘traditionalist scholars’ with allies of traditionally minded or even extreme fundamentalist Muslims on the one hand and ‘revisionists’ with progressive scientists on the other. The discovery of a scientific method which allows us to come closer to ‘what really happened’ (L. von Ranke) and to establish a ‘foundation of secure and unshakeable facts’, ‘irrespective of our doubts’ (E. Bernheim), may also mean that our findings sometimes confirm the outlines of what Muslim believers had accepted as fact all along. Whenever this is the case – as, indeed, it is here – scholarly honesty requires us to declare that Muslim tradition is not always as unreliable as many Western scholars have assumed.

THE ṬĀLIB: I have been taught and have long believed that the reports of the *sīrah* were merely expressions of salvation history and purely fictitious. Please allow me some more time to reconsider my position before I agree completely with what you say.

THE SHAYKH: Of course, I fully understand – it is extremely difficult to abandon a paradigm we have been in the thrall of for a long time.

Appendix 1

The corpus

The following corpus presents the complexes of traditions discussed in this book. It is arranged systematically, according to recension, version and derivative version. This system will very often allow for the authenticity of any given tradition to be checked. When the state of dependence expressed in the *isnād* can also be established by evidence in the texts, then this becomes a strong indication for the authenticity of the transmission. The system provides a positive result when all derivative versions of a tradition (e.g. all the derivative versions bundled under I A 1.1.1) exhibit greater textual similarity among themselves than any degree of similarity exhibited by the version to which they belong (in this case I A 1.1) to other versions of the same recension (e.g. to I A 1.4, 1.5 or 1.6). Should the text of a version exhibit too much similarity to the text of another version of the same recension, then the reason may be a direct dependency of one text on the other. This means that a transmitter may have copied the text of a fellow transmitter as opposed to receiving it from a teacher by way of ‘audition’ (*samā*), as the *isnād* would have it (this is the phenomenon which has been termed the ‘spread of traditions’).

An example of authentic transmission is provided by the bundle I A 1.6 (Ibn Ishāq’s version of the Zuhri recension). In this instance, all the derivative versions of 1.6 (i.e. 1.6.1 (at-Tirmidī and al-‘Uṭāridī from Ibn Ishāq) and 1.6.2 (Ibn Hisām from Ibn Ishāq)) contain only the first four sentences of the text of the Zuhri recension. This indicates that the originator of the version, Ibn Ishāq, had himself shortened the Zuhri recension in this way. There is other evidence that Ibn Ishāq did in fact do so (cf. above p. 48).

An example of inauthentic transmission is provided by II C.4. In this instant, the tradent, Abū Uways, states that he is transmitting on the authority of Hishām ibn ‘Urwah (II A.4). The genuine Hishām ibn ‘Urwah recension is represented in at least five versions which all, with some variations, exhibit the same characteristics. The tradition given by Abū Uways does not actually exhibit these characteristics but rather different ones, among them those which belong clearly to the Zuhri recension.

I Muḥammad's first revelation: The *iqra'* narration

A. Recensions definitely or probably derived from the same archetype

1. The Zuhrī (< 'Urwah) recension

1.1 The version of Ma'mar ibn Rāšid < az-Zuhrī

1.1.1 'Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī

'Abd ar-Razzāq (1970–72: V, 32ff.) = az-Zuhrī (1980: 43ff.)

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 232–3)

Muslim (1972: II, 206–7) (abridged)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1988–91: I, 216ff.)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83: I, 48ff.)

al-Wāḥidī (n.d.: 5) (end missing)

al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 135ff.)

Abū Nu'aym (1950: 168ff.)

1.1.2 'Abdallāh ibn Mu'ād < Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī (end missing)

al-Azraqī (1858: 426–7)

1.1.3 Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr < Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī (only the *fatrah* annex)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 78)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1155) = al-Ṭabarī (1988: 70).

1.1.4 Sufyān (which one?) < Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī (only the *fatrah* annex)

al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 108)

1.1.5 al-Wāqidī < Ma'mar + Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh < az-Zuhrī (abridged; only the beginning)

Ibn Sa'īd (1905–40: I/1, 129)

al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 105)

1.2 The version of al-Layṭ ibn Sa'īd < 'Uqayl ibn Ḥālid < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: I, 52ff.)

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: XVIII, 379) (abridged; only the beginning)

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: XIII, 171) (abridged; beginning missing)

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: XVIII, 380) (abridged; beginning missing)

Muslim (1972: II, 204) (abridged; beginning missing)

al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 139–40) (abridged; beginning missing)

al-Wāḥidī (1994: IV, 527–8) (abridged; only the *iqra'* narration)

1.3 The version of 'Abdallāh ibn Wahb < Yūnus ibn Yazīd < az-Zuhrī

Abū 'Awānah (1362–3 AH: I, 120ff.) (with *fatrah* annex)

Muslim (1972: II, 197ff.) (without *fatrah* annex)

al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: IX, 5–6) (without *fatrah* annex)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 139) (only mentioned)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1148) (only mentioned) = al-Ṭabarī (1988: 69).

1.4 The version of Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī l-Aḥḍar < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 206 and 207) (two fragments: beginning and end)

1.5 The version of an-Nu'mān ibn Rāšid < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1147ff.) = al-Ṭabarī (1988: 67ff.).

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 138–9)

1.6 The version of Ibn Ishāq < az-Zuhrī (abridged; only the beginning)

1.6.1 Yūnus ibn Bukayr < Ibn Ishāq < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Tirmidī (1983: V, 257)

al-'Uṭāridī (1978: 120, 132)

1.6.2 al-Bakkā'ī < Ibn Ishāq < az-Zuhrī

Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151)

1.7 The contaminated version of 'Abdallāh ibn al-Mubārak < Yūnus + al-Layṭ < 'Uqayl < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, Ṣaḥīḥ in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, pp. 369ff.)

1.8 The contaminated version of al-Layṭ < 'Uqayl + 'Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, Ṣaḥīḥ in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 26, pp. 196ff.)

al-Buḥārī, Ṣaḥīḥ in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, pp. 379–80) (abridged)

1.9 The contaminated version 'Abdallāh ibn al-Mubārak < Yūnus + Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 153) (abridged; only the beginning)

1.10 The tradition az-Zuhrī < Muḥammad ibn an-Nu'mān (only the beginning)

[al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 139)]

2. The 'Urwah [< 'Ā'īṣah] transmission

2.1 The Zuhrī < 'Urwah recension (cf. above A.1)

2.2 The (fragmentary) Hišām ibn 'Urwah < 'Urwah recension

- Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: I/1, 130) (first fragment)
az-Zubayr b. Bakkār (1999: 419 (no. 720) second fragment)
Abū l-Farağ al-Iṣfahānī 1285 AH: III, 14 = 3rd edn, III, 120 (second fragment)
al-'Uṭāridī (1978: 135) (third fragment)
aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 127–8) (third fragment)

2.3 The Ibn Lahṭah < Abū l-Aswad < 'Urwah recension

2.3.1 Long version

- al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 142–3)
Ibn Kaṭīr (1932–9: III, 13–14)
as-Suyūṭī (1967: I, 231–2)
Ibn Sayyid an-Nās (1986: I, 112) (wrong *isnād*)
(cf. also Ya'qūbī 1960: II, 22–3)

2.3.2 Short version

- Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 54)
Ibn Kaṭīr (1980: IV, 249)

2.4 The tradition according to Yazīd ibn Rūmān < 'Urwah

- Abū Nu'aym (1950: 174)

3. The Ibn Ishāq (< Wahb < 'Ubayd) recension

3.1 The al-Bakkā'ī < Ibn Ishāq version

- Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151ff. = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 105ff.).

3.2 The Salamah ibn al-Faḍl < Ibn Ishāq version

- aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1149ff. = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 70ff.)

3.3 The Yūnus ibn Bukayr < Ibn Ishāq version

- al-'Uṭāridī (1978: 120ff.)
al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 146ff.)

3.4 The al-Wāqidī [*< Ibn Ishāq*] version (abridged)

- al-Balāḍurī (n.d., vol. 1, p. 110f.)

4. The rağul < 'Ā'īshah tradition

- aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 215–16)
Abū Nu'aym (1950: 171)

5. *The probable archetype: the narration of ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr*

5.1 The Ibn Ishāq < Wahb < ‘Ubayd recension (cf. above A.3)

5.2 The *awā’il* tradition according to ‘Amr ibn Dīnār < ‘Ubayd

5.2.1 In the Šu‘bah ibn al-Ḥaḡḡāḡ < ‘Amr ibn Dīnār transmission

Ibn Abī Šaybah (1966–83: X, 541)

al-Balāḏurī (n.d.: I, 110)

Ibn Sa’d (1905–40: I/1, 130)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 139)

5.2.2 In the Ibn ‘Uyaynah < ‘Amr ibn Dīnār transmission

‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 313)

[5.3 The transmission according to ‘Urwah [< ‘Ā’iṣah] (?) (cf. above A.2)]

6. *The contaminated tradition according to ‘Amr ibn Dīnār [< ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Umayr?] + az-Zuhrī [< ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’iṣah?]*

‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 313)

B. The tradition according to Abū Salamah ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān < Ḡābir ibn ‘Abdallāh

1. *The version according to Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kaṭīr*

1.1 al-Awzā’ī < Yaḥyā

Muslim (1972: II, 207–8)

an-Nasā’ī (1990: II, 477–8)

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: III, 377)

Abū ‘Awānah (1362–3 AH: I, 113–14)

al-Balāḏurī (n.d.: I, 107)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1988–91: I, 221–2)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83: I, 51)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 78)

al-Wāḥidī (n.d.: 7)

al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 155)

1.2 ‘Alī ibn al-Mubārak < Yaḥyā

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 323)

Muslim (1972: II, 208–9) (abridged)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1153–4) = al-Ṭabarī (1988: 74).

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 78)

1.3 Šaybān ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān < Yaḥyā

Muğāhid (1989: 682)

an-Nasā’ī (1990: II, 478–9)

1.4 Abān ibn Yazīd al-‘Aṭṭār < Yaḥyā

al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 109)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1988–91: I, 220)

1.5 Ḥarb ibn Šaddād < Yaḥyā

al-Buḥārī, *Šaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 323–4)

aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 235)

1.6 The contaminated version according to al-Awzā’ī + ‘Alī ibn Mubārak < Yaḥyā

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: III, 306)

1.7 Unidentified version

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: I, 125)

2. The version according to az-Zuhrī (cf. A.1.1 and above, p. 43f.)

2.1 Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī

at-Tirmidī (1983: V, 100)

‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1970–2: V, 323–4) = az-Zuhrī (1980: 45)

‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 262)

al-Wāḥidī (n.d.: 7)

al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 109)

al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 138)

2.2 Yūnus ibn Yazīd < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1155–6 = al-Ṭabarī (1988: 76) and (1321 AH: XXX, 78)

Abū ‘Awānah (1362–63 AH: I, 112)

Muslim (1972: II, 205–6)

2.3 al-Layṭ < ‘Uqayl < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, *Šaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 62–3)

al-Buḥārī, *Šaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 13, 40)

al-Buḥārī, *Šaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 326)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 22, 411)
Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: III, 325)
al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: IX, 6)
al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 156–7)
Muslim (1972: II, 206)
an-Nasā’ī (1990: II, 476)

2.4 Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥafṣah < az-Zuhrī

Ibn Abī Ṣaybah (1966–83: XIV, 294–5)

2.5 Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī l-Aḥḍar < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 235)

2.6 The contaminated version al-Layṭ < ‘Uqayl + ‘Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 325)

2.7 Unidentified version

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: I, 125)

C. Probably independent transmissions (sample)

1. The transmission according to Sulaymān aṣ-Ṣaybānī < Ibn Ṣaddād

Ibn Abī Ṣaybah (1966–83: XIV, 292)
aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1148 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 69–70)
aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 139)
al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 108)

2. The transmission according to Sulaymān at-Taymī

Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 54)

D. Late contaminated and harmonized compilations drawn from several recensions (sample)

1 al-Ḥarkūṣī, Ṣaraf an-nabī; ms. London, British Museum, Or. 3014, fol. 24a–25a
2 al-Ḥalabī (1320 AH: I, 233ff.)

II The tradition of the slander against ‘Ā’iṣah: The *ḥadīṭ al-ifk*

A. Recensions based on the same archetype

1. The recension of az-Zuhrī (< ‘Urwah + ‘Alqamah + Sa‘īd + ‘Alqamah + ‘Ubayd Allāh)

1.1 The version according to Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid < az-Zuhrī

1.1.1 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī

‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1970–2: V, 410ff.) = az-Zuhrī (1980: 116ff.)

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 194ff.)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1988–91: X, 13ff.)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 50ff.)

1.1.2 Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr < Ma‘mar < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 63ff.)

an-Nasā‘ī (1990: II, 112ff.) (incomplete end)

1.2 The version according to Fulayḥ ibn Sulaymān < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 11, 89ff.)

‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 311ff.)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1988–91: XVI, 13ff.)

Abū Ya‘lā (1986: VIII, 322ff.)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 61ff.)

al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: VII, 302) (only the beginning)

al-Wāḥidī (1994: III, 307ff.)

1.3 The version according to Yūnus ibn Yazīd < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 57ff.)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 11, 64) (incomplete)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 12, 31) (incomplete)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 15, 195) (incomplete)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 28, 258) (incomplete)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 28, 270) (incomplete)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 28, 317) (incomplete)

Abū Dāwūd (1950: IV, 324) (abridged)

al-Bayhaqī (1985: IV, 64) (?)

al-Bazzār (2003–9: XVIII, 171ff. no. 153/129)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 56ff.)

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: II, 273ff.)

1.4 The version according to Ibrāhīm ibn Sa‘d < Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 16, 3ff.)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 17, 249) (incomplete)
al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 25, 39) (incomplete)
al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 25, 61) (incomplete)
al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 28, 109) (incomplete)
an-Nasā'ī (n.d.: 39ff.)
an-Nasā'ī (1990: I, 599) (incomplete end)
Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 197–8)
Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 198) (abridged)
aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 88ff.) (slightly abridged)
Muslim (1972: XVII, 114) (only excerpts)
Abū Ya'lā (1986: VIII, 339ff.)
Abū Ya'lā (1986: VIII, 348ff.) (slightly abridged)

1.5 The version according to 'Uqayl ibn Ḥālīd < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 92ff.)

1.6 The version according to Ishāq ibn Rāšīd < az-Zuhrī

Ibn 'Asākir (1995: V, 120ff.)
aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 78ff.)
'Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 318) (abridged)

1.7 The version according to Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Abī 'Atīq < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 69ff.)

1.8 The version according to Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr < Ibn Ğurayğ < az-Zuhrī (slightly extended)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 66ff.)

1.9 The version according to 'Aṭā' ibn Abī Muslim al-Ḥurāsānī < az-Zuhrī

Ibn 'Asākir (1995: XXIX, 331ff.)
aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 74ff.)

1.10 The version Mālik ibn Anas < Yahyā ibn Sa'īd + 'Ubayd Allāh ibn 'Umar < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 83ff.)

1.11 The version according to Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī l-Aḥḍar < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 102ff.)

1.12 The contaminated version of Ma'mar + Yūnus < az-Zuhrī

Muslim (1972: XVII, 102ff.)

1.13 The contaminated version of Šālih ibn Kaysān + Yūnus < az-Zuhrī

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 17, 249) (abridged)

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 25, 39–40) (abridged)

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 25, 61) (abridged)

1.14 The version according to Ya'qūb ibn 'Aṭā' + Ziyād ibn Sa'd < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 105–6)

1.15 The extended version (with narrative frame: az-Zuhrī with the caliph al-Walīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik)

1.15.1 Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī

'Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 44)

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 16, 7f.)

'Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 337–8)

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: II, 278)

al-Bayhaqī (1985: IV: 72)

1.15.2 Aflaḥ ibn 'Abdallāh ibn al-Muğīrah < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 97ff.)

(?) 'Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 339) (abridged)

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: II, 278)

al-Bayhaqī (1985: IV, 73)

1.15.3 Aflaḥ + Ismā'īl ibn Rāfi' < az-Zuhrī

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 103) (abridged)

2. The recension of Ibn Ishāq (< az-Zuhrī + Yaḥyā ibn 'Abbād + 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr)

2.1 The version according to al-Bakkā'ī < Ibn Ishāq

Ibn Hišām (1858–60: I, 731ff. = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 493ff.)

2.2 The version according to Salamah ibn al-Faḍl < Ibn Ishāq

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1518ff. = al-Ṭabarī 1997: 58ff.)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 66) (abridged)

2.3 The version according to Ibn 'Ulayyah < Ibn Ishāq

'Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 328ff.)

3. *The Wāqidi recension*

al-Wāqidi (1966: II, 426ff.)

Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: II/1, 46–7) (short summary)

(?) al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 342) (short summary)

4. *The Hišām ibn 'Urwah (< 'Urwah) recension*

4.1 The version according to Abū Usāmah < Hišām

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 97ff.)

Muslim (1972: XVII, 114ff.) (abridged)

at-Tirmidī (1983: V, 13ff.)

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 59–60)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 66–7)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 62) (abridged)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 108ff.)

4.2 The version according to Ḥammād ibn Salamah < Hišām

'Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 325ff.)

Abū Dāwūd (1950: IV, 481) (abridged)

Abū Ya'lā (1986: VIII, 335ff.)

al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: VII, 101)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 106ff.)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 129) (abridged)

al-Wāḥidī (1994: III, 310) (abridged)

4.3 The version according to Yūnus ibn Bukayr < Hišām

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: II, 270ff.)

4.4 The version according to Yaḥyā ibn Abī Zakarīyā' < Hišām (incomplete)

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 28, 110)

4.5 The epistle version: Abān ibn Yazīd al-'Aṭṭār < Hišām

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 61; cf. p. 63)

B. Independent transmissions

1. The tradition of 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr [< 'Amrah < 'Ā'ishah]

1.1 The version according to Ibn Ishāq < 'Abdallāh ibn Abī Bakr

1.1.1 Ibn Abī 'Adī < Ibn Ishāq

at-Tirmidī (1983: V, 17)

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Abū Dāwūd (1950: IV, 225)

Ibn Māğah (1952–3: II, 857)

ʿUmar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 337)

1.1.2 Ibn Bukayr < Ibn Ishāq

al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: VIII 250)

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: II, 279)

1.1.3 Muḥammad ibn Salamah < Ibn Ishāq

Abū Dāwūd (1950: IV, 226)

al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: VIII, 250)

1.2 The version according to Ibn Abī Yaḥyā < ʿAbdallāh ibn Abī Bakr

ʿAbd ar-Razzāq (1970–2: V, 419) = az-Zuhrī (1980: 112)

ʿAbd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 46)

1.3 The version according to aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Maḥlad < al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd < ʿAbdallāh ibn Abī Bakr

ʿUmar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 338)

2. *The first tradition (querying of ʿAlī and Usāmah) of Ibn Ishāq < Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbbād < ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbdallāh < ʿĀʾišah*

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 122)

3. *The second tradition (ifk + tayammum) of Ibn Ishāq < Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbbād < ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbdallāh*

ʿUmar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 348)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 121)

4. *The recension of Ḥuṣayn ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān (< Abū Wāʾil < Masrūq < Umm Rūmān)*

4.1 The version according to Ibn Fuḍayl < Ḥuṣayn

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-ʿAsqalānī (1978: pt 13, 166)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1988–91: XVI, 22)

4.2 The version according to Abū ʿAwānah < Ḥuṣayn

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-ʿAsqalānī (1978: pt 16, 9–10)

al-Buḥārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥağar al-ʿAsqalānī (1978: pt 17, 249–50) (abridged)

aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 231–2)

4.3 The version according to Sulaymān ibn Kaṭīr < Ḥuṣayn

al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 91)

4.4 The version according to Abū Ğa'far ar-Rāzī < Ḥuṣayn

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 367–8)

4.5 The version according to 'Alī ibn 'Aṣim < Ḥuṣayn

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 367–8)

4.6 The version according to Suwayd ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz < Ḥuṣayn

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 122)

5. The tradition of Warqā' < Ibn Abī Naġīḥ < Muġāhid

Muġāhid (1989: 490)

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 63)

6. The report in Sufyān aṭ-Ṭawrī's Qur'ān commentary

Sufyān aṭ-Ṭawrī (1983: 182)

'Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 336)

7. The tradition according to Sa'īd ibn Ğubayr

7.1 The *mursal* tradition

Sufyān aṭ-Ṭawrī (1983: 182)

'Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 338)

7.2 The tradition of Ḥuṣayf < Sa'īd ibn Ğubayr

Sufyān aṭ-Ṭawrī (1983: 182)

'Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 338)

C. Dubious and inauthentic imitations of the main recensions

1. The tradition according to an-Nu'mān ibn Rāšid < az-Zuhrī < 'Urwah < 'Ā'īṣah

al-Bayhaqī (1985: IV, 63)

aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: II, 269)

2. The tradition of al-Walīd ibn Muḥammad al-Muwaqqarī < az-Zuhrī < 'Urwah < 'Ā'īṣah

'Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 318ff.)

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3. *The tradition according to ‘Alqamah ibn Waqqāṣ and others’*

aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 67–8)

4. *The tradition of Abū Uways < Hišām ibn ‘Urwah*

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 111ff.)

al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 232ff.)

5. *The tradition according to Nāfi’ < ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Umar*

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 125ff.)

al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 237ff.)

6. *The tradition according to ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abbās*

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 123–4)

al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 236–7)

7. *The tradition according to al-Aswad ibn Yazīd*

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 118ff.)

al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 230–1)

8. *The tradition according to Abū Hurayrah*

al-Bazzār (2003–9: XIV, 334–5, no. 8011)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 129) (abridged)

al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 230)

9. *The tradition according to ‘Attāb ibn Baṣīr < Ḥuṣayf < Miqsam < ‘Ā’iṣah*

‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 323ff.)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 117–8)

al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 229–30)

10. *The tradition according to Abū Salamah < ‘Ā’iṣah*

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 30)

Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 103)

Ibn Ḥibbān (1988–91: XVI, 21)

aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 21)

11. *The report in Muqātil ibn Sulaymān’s Qur’ān commentary*

Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (1979–87: III, 187ff.)

12. The version according to Zayd ibn Aslam/Ibn Sa'd ibn Raf'ah

ʿUmar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 339–40)

ʿAbdallāh ibn Wahb (1993: pt 1, fol. 22a, 13–22b, 1)

ʿUmar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 340)

D. Later contaminated and harmonizing compilation from numerous recensions¹

al-Ḥalabī (1320 AH: II, 292ff.)

E. Legendary reworking of the material in the style of popular mağāzī works

Ḥadīṭ *al-ijfk*; manuscript Berlin Ms. or. oct. 1459, fol. 156a–170b²

- 1 Further secondary sources, poems etc. about ʿĀʾišah and the ḥadīṭ *al-ijfk* in particular can be found in the bibliography of Spellberg (1994: 27ff.).
- 2 Schoeler (1990: no. 311).

Appendix 2

List of sigla

I *Termini technici*

- CL*: common link of a tradition; the transmitter after which the *isnād* of a tradition branches out; the main branching point of an *isnād*.
- PCL*: partial common link; a transmitter at a secondary branching point in the *isnād* of a tradition.

II Versions of traditions reporting the first revelation experience

- FV*: fragmentary version; a version of the Zuhri (< 'Urwah < 'Ā'ishah) recension in two fragments reported on the authority of Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī l-Aḥḍar (aṭ-Ṭayālīsī 1321 AH: 206, 207; cf. Corpus, I A.1.4).
- SV I*: short version I; the first four sentences or so of the Ibn Ishāq version of the Zuhri (< 'Urwah < 'Ā'ishah) recension (Ibn Hišām 1858–60: 151 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 105 and others; cf. Corpus, I A.1.6).
- SV II*: short version II; a Ma'mar + Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh version of the Zuhri (< 'Urwah < 'Ā'ishah) recension which consists only of the first few sentences (Ibn Sa'd 1905: I/1, 129; al-Balāḍurī n.d.: I, 105; cf. Corpus, I A.1.1.5).
- SV III*: short version III; the tradition reported on the authority of Hišām ibn 'Urwah < 'Urwah (Ibn Sa'd 1905: I/1, p.130; cf. Corpus, I A.2.2).
- SV IV*: short version IV; the short version of the Ibn Lahī'ah (< Abū l-Aswad < 'Urwah) recension (Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī 1978: pt 1, 54; Ibn Kaṭīr 1980: IV 249; cf. Corpus, I A.2.3.2).
- LV I*: long version I; the more frequently transmitted of the two long versions of the Zuhri (< 'Urwah < 'Ā'ishah) recension (the *mā anā bi-qāri'* version) in the transmission of 'Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma'mar < az-Zuhri ('Abd ar-Razzāq 1970: V, 321ff. = az-Zuhri 1980: 43ff. and others; cf. Corpus, I A.1.1.1); in the transmission of Yūnus ibn Yazīd < az-Zuhri (Muslim 1972: II, 197ff. and others; cf. Corpus, I A.1.3); and in the transmission of al-Layṭ < 'Uqayl < az-Zuhri (al-Buḡārī, *ṣaḥīḥ* in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī 1978: pt 1, 52ff. and others; cf. Corpus, I A.1.2).

- LV II*: long version II; the other of the two long versions of the Zuhri (< 'Urwah < 'A'ishah) recension which was transmitted only once (*mā agra 'u* version) by an-Nu'mān ibn Rāšid < az-Zuhri (aṭ-Ṭabarī 1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1147ff. = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 67ff. = 1321 AH: XXX, 138–9; cf. Corpus, I A.1.5).
- LV III*: long version III; the complete Ibn Ishāq (< Wahb ibn Kaysān < 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr) recension (another *mā agra 'u* version) in the transmission of al-Bakkā'ī < Ibn Ishāq (Ibn Hišām 1858–1860: 151ff. = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 105ff.; cf. Corpus, I A.3.1); in the transmission of Salamah ibn al-Faḍl < Ibn Ishāq (aṭ-Ṭabarī 1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1149ff. = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 70ff.; cf. Corpus, I A.3.2); and in the transmission of Yūnus ibn Bukayr < Ibn Ishāq (al-'Uṭāridī 1978: 120ff.; cf. Corpus, I A.3.3).
- LV IV*: long version IV; the long version of the Ibn Lahī'ah (< Abū l-Aswad < 'Urwah) recension (the *kayfa agra 'u* version) (al-Bayhaqī 1985: II,142–3 and others; cf. Corpus, I A.2.3.1).
- MV*: intermediate version; a text of the Ma'mar version of the Zuhri recension reported on the authority of 'Abdallāh ibn Mu'āḍ (al-Azraqī 1858: 426–7; cf. Corpus, I A.1.1.2).

Notes

Introduction

- 1 Schoeler (2006).
- 2 On the historical value of the Islamic biographical sources about the first two centuries AH see Schoeler (2002: 363ff.). I argued that this corpus, written much later than the events, gives us *on the whole* a generally correct picture about the teaching and learning methods in early Islam – in spite of the contradictions and distorted and falsified *individual stories* that it may contain.
- 3 Cf. p. 28 with n. 111 and pp. 29, 35f. Cf. also Günther (1994: 197ff.) who calls such writings ‘Verfasserwerke’ (roughly: ‘systematic compositions’), which occupy an intermediate position between ‘conclusively edited works’ and ‘lecture notes’.
- 4 The period of the genesis and the date of the final redaction of the Qur’anic text are also hotly contested. In fact, Wansbrough’s ‘late-dating’ – he put it as late as the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century CE (Wansbrough 1977, 2004) – rendered it one of the most controversial issues of the debate.
- 5 With the possible exception of a recently discovered inscription which mentions and dates the death of the caliph ‘Umar; cf. p. 14.
- 6 Already correctly pointed out by Crone (1980: 3ff.) and Cook in his epilogue to the conference on *Voix et calame en Islam médiéval*, organized by the Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes in Paris (March 1993). (This epilogue is not in the published version; cf. Cook 1997.)
- 7 Cf. the excellent study by von Hinüber (1990).
- 8 Cf. Hoffmann and Narten (1989).
- 9 As Cook indicates in his remarks referred to in n. 6.
- 10 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 114 = 1989b: 218) with references.
- 11 For this reason, the authenticity of ancient Arabic poetry is less of a problem than that of the religious tradition, even though the former took at least as long as the latter to be put into its final written form (in works of the third/ninth century). The thesis of Margoliouth/Ṭāhā Ḥusayn according to which ancient Arabic poetry is a global falsification is nowadays obsolete. On the question of the authenticity of ancient Arabic poetry cf. Wagner (1987–8: I, 12–29); Bauer (1992: I, 8ff.); Schoeler (2006: 65ff. = 1992a: 7ff.).
- 12 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 40–42 = 1985: 223–7, 83–4, 117ff. = 1992a: 35ff. and 1989b: 222ff.).
- 13 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 73ff. and esp. 75f. = 1992a: 19ff. 23–4).
- 14 Cf. van Ess (1975: p. vii).

- 15 For the following cf. e.g. Donner (1998: 1–31); L. Conrad's Introduction to Horovitz (2002: pp. x–xxxiii); H. Motzki's Introduction to Motzki (2000: pp. xi–xvi).
- 16 Caetani (1905–7: 18ff., esp. 57).
- 17 Esp. Lammens (1910).
- 18 Lammens (1910); cf. Becker (1913 and 1912: 54ff.).
- 19 Lammens (1910: 28).
- 20 Esp. in Nöldeke (1914 and 1907).
- 21 Cf. the references listed in n. 18.
- 22 Blachère (1952).
- 23 Cf. Schacht (1949, 1953).
- 24 In his well-known *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (1950).
- 25 Buhl (1930: 366–77, esp. n. 39 on p. 377).
- 26 Watt (1953: pp. xiff.; 1956: 336ff.).
- 27 Paret (1980: 151ff., esp. 153). Their views of course differ in some respects. For example, as we can see from their divergent assessment of traditions pertaining to *sūrah* 96, Paret is more critical than Watt; cf. Paret (1980: 47ff.) and Watt (1953: 40ff.).
- 28 Horovitz (1927–8). 'The basic thesis of Horovitz' study is that written transmission of material about the life of the Prophet can be traced back to the generation of the *tābi'ūn*, those Muslims who had known Companions of the Prophet, but have never associated with Muḥammad himself' (L. Conrad in the Introduction to Horovitz (2002: p. xxvii)).
- 29 Fück (1925). Fück always advocated the thesis that 'Islamic tradition contains an authentic core'; cf. Fück (2004: 15–19) = Fück (1981: 225–9) and Fück (1981: 252–7) = Fück (1953).
- 30 Guillaume (1955), esp. the introduction; cf. also his articles listed in the Bibliography.
- 31 Cf. the Bibliography.
- 32 Paret (1954).
- 33 Al-Samuk (1978: 4ff.) presents an overview of the most important works in the field of *sūrah* research until c.1978. Additional works up to the middle of the 1990s can be found in the bibliographies of Jarrar (1989), Rubin (1995) and Motzki (2000).
- 34 Cf. esp. Noth (1973a = 1994, 1968 and 1971).
- 35 According to Wellhausen, traditions fall into two basic groups: material transmitted by Meccan and Medinese (Ḥiǧāzī) authorities, e.g. Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī, and material transmitted by 'Irāqī scholars, e.g. Abū Miḥnaf and Sayf ibn 'Umar. Wellhausen gives precedence to the former of these two groups (the subject of the present study) and classifies the material transmitted by the latter as 'legendary'. Noth, on the other hand, has shown that judgements should be based on separate traditions, not schools, since, as he points out, both of these putative schools often adduced the same traditions.
- 36 Cf. Noth (1973a: 12ff. = 1994: 6). As will become obvious, I concur with Noth on this and most other points he makes. Yet, since we are not confronted with intentional and conscious forgeries, I would prefer the terms 'modification' or 'reshaping process'. That this is in line with Noth's own ideas can be seen in the following quotation from the most recent English edition of his book (Noth 1994: 6): 'As used in this book, the concept of "falsification" refers to the results of the work of the transmitters, and not to their motives. That is, it is not meant to convey the notion that tradents and authors worked with the deliberate and consistent aim of producing false or misleading narratives of past events, but rather to assert that the results of the ways in which they handled their material was to give a picture of historical events which was highly distorted, or even entirely wrong.'

- 37 Cf. Noth (1973a: 12–13 = 1994: 6).
- 38 Noth (1973a: 101ff. = 1994: 109ff.).
- 39 Noth (1968: 295).
- 40 Cf. the following statement (Noth 1994: 24): ‘A central argument of this book will continue to be that the tradition offers much material which, if in need of careful examination, is still of historical value for the early period.’
- 41 Landau-Tasserion (1986); similar findings in Lecker (1995a).
- 42 Near ʿArṭūs in Syria.
- 43 Conrad (1992).
- 44 U. Sezgin (1978).
- 45 U. Sezgin (1971).
- 46 *Ibid.* 94.
- 47 *Ibid.* 89.
- 48 *Ibid.* 91, 93.
- 49 *Ibid.* 94.
- 50 *Ibid.* 95.
- 51 Wansbrough (1977, 1978).
- 52 Crone (1977, 1980 and 1987).
- 53 Cook (1983: 61ff.; 1981).
- 54 van Ess (1978; cf. also 1991: 12).
- 55 E.g. Watt (1983: 32).
- 56 Esp. Serjeant (1990).
- 57 In her later works, *Slaves on Horses* (1980) and *Meccan Trade* (1987), Crone is no longer as consistent in her dismissal of the early historical sources as in *Hagarism* (1977): on the one hand, she rejects their authenticity and usefulness in theory, while on the other, she relies on them in her study – something she herself (cf. Crone 1980: 1) and her critics are aware of. In his review of *Meccan Trade*, Motzki (1989: 226) writes: ‘P. Crone’s theory ... is undermined by her own understanding of the sources; she is forced to derive “facts” from those sources which she believes to have been proven to be useless.’ Cf. also the verdict of Wagner (1982: 191) in his review of *Slaves on Horses*: ‘we could of course ask: if a part of Arabic historiography is confirmed, do we carry our scepticism against the rest, which for some reason lacks confirmation, to excess?’
- 58 In Wansbrough (1977) = (2004).
- 59 Crone (1980: 11ff.).
- 60 *Ibid.*; in fact, many historical traditions – e.g. those transmitted by ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr – are not at all short in their original version, but run to a considerable length (cf. Chapter 2, n. 143). Cf. also U. Sezgin (1978: 174) and Schoeler and Görke (2008: 18ff., 284–5).
- 61 Crone (1987: 215ff.); also Cook (1983: 66).
- 62 Cf. Cook (1981: 156).
- 63 Cf. Cook (1983: 73ff.) and Crone (1980: 15).
- 64 This label is not warranted, because Becker shares Lammens’ views only to some extent; cf. p. 3.
- 65 Watt (1962).
- 66 Watt (1983).
- 67 Watt (1983: 32–3; for the following cf. also Watt (1956: 336–7) and Watt (1962: 27).
- 68 Watt (1962: 27).
- 69 Fück (1925: 38 with n. 37). Additional observations on chronology on pp. 89–91, above.

- 70 Cf. p. 27.
- 71 See e.g. Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 427) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 289) which Watt himself quotes.
- 72 Cf. the collective *isnād* ('*an az-Zuhrī* etc.) introducing Ibn Ishāq's report on the battle of Uḥūd, quoted by Watt, in Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 555) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 370).
- 73 Ibn Hišām 1858–60: 555) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 341ff.).
- 74 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 555) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 485ff., 506ff.).
- 75 Of course, the biographical literature mentions scholars specialized in assembling these lists. Šuraḥbīl ibn Sa'd (d. 123/741; cf. Sezgin 1967–84: I, 279) is described as an expert on the *muhāǧīrūn* and the participants in the battles of Badr and Uḥūd; cf. Ibn Ḥaǧar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: X, 322); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: II, 266); Ibn 'Adī (1988: IV, 40ff.); Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 279); Fück (1925: 8). In all probability, later authors would have used his lists. In the eyes of some critics, however, Šuraḥbīl was regarded as unreliable: Ibn Ishāq is reported to have said that he refused to transmit from him (Ibn 'Adī 1988: IV, 40–1).
- 76 Cf. Lecker (2005: esp. 191, 196ff.).
- 77 E.g. Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 972, -5) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 659) = aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1756) = al-Ṭabarī (1990: 116); Ibn Hišām (1858–60: p. 933, -5) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 628) = aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1710) = al-Ṭabarī (1990: 67). Cf. also Lecker (2005: 196) and Chapter 1, p. 107.
- 78 Paret (1954: 151).
- 79 Von Stülpnagel (1956).
- 80 Ibid. 54.
- 81 Ibid. 59–60, 117ff. and esp. 121ff.
- 82 Sellheim (1967).
- 83 Ibid. 73ff.
- 84 His student Al-Samuk (1978: 14) prefers to write about 'influences and tendencies' in places where he paraphrases (rather than quotes) his teacher's views. Sellheim himself seems to have recognized the problem; in a subsequent publication, he uses the phrase 'layers and tendencies' (Sellheim 1987: 3, n. 2).
- 85 Nöldeke (1898). The title of his article is 'Zur tendenziösen Gestaltung der Urgeschichte des Islāms' ('On the tendentious structure of the earliest history of Islām').
- 86 Horovitz (1914). The title of his article is 'Zur Muhammadlegende' ('On the Muḥammad legend').
- 87 Cf. Nöldeke (1907: 304) and esp. Horovitz (1914: 43ff.); but cf. above, pp. 77–78; 122. (in 'Urwah's tradition material we find, apart from the angelic apparition in the report of the first revelation which was based on the account of a *qāṣṣ* almost no miracles!)
- 88 Cf. Crone (1980: 14).
- 89 Ibid. 7 and 14–15 with p. 210, n. 78).
- 90 Sellheim (1967: 78).
- 91 See e.g. Kister (1962, 1970a).
- 92 See e.g. Lecker (1993).
- 93 Fück (1939) = Fück (2004: 15–19).
- 94 Cf. the remark by Donner (1998: 18, n. 42).
- 95 Serjeant (1990).
- 96 Crone (1992).
- 97 Ibid. 472–3.
- 98 Watt (1983: 32).

- 99 Cook (1983: 67).
- 100 Becker (1912: 542).
- 101 Cook (1981: 156).
- 102 On the problems (or shortcomings) of this classification, see Motzki (2003: esp. p. 257); Görke/Schoeler (2008: 7–8).
- 103 Cf. e.g. Ibn Warraq (2000a: 9); Berg (2003b: 262, 275); Koren/Nevo (1991: 88–9).
- 104 E.g. Cook (1981: 156); Ibn Warraq (2000b: 2–3).
- 105 Berg (2003b: 259); Ibn Warraq (2000b: 61).
- 106 See e.g. Donner (1998: 22–3). Some time ago, Crone and Cook publicly distanced themselves from the central theory of *Hagarism*, cf. <http://baltimorechronicle.com/2006/042606AliKhan.shtml>.
- 107 Donner (1998: 20).
- 108 We should keep in mind that the labels ‘sanguine’ and ‘traditionalist’ were coined by their critics, not by the scholars thus classified; as we will see, they are not appropriate. Note that Bernheim (1903: 180; cf. above, p. xi) referred to his sceptics as ‘sanguine’, whereas the new sceptics label ‘traditionalists’ as ‘sanguine’!
- 109 Wansbrough (1978), repro. in Berg (2003a: 3–19). Cf. Berg (2003a: 7).
- 110 In their 1977 book.
- 111 van Ess (2001: 391–2).
- 112 Ibn Warraq (2000b); Raven in *EF*.
- 113 Berg (2000, 2003b).
- 114 Calder (1993). Cf. esp. the reviews by Motzki (1998) and Muranyi (1997) and the more recent comments by Motzki (2003a), Görke (2003: index, s.v. Calder), Muranyi (2003: 327) and Melchert (2003: 308ff.). The latter writes: ‘Although he [scil. Y. Dutton] exaggerates their similarity [i.e. that of the eight extant recensions of the *Muwaṭṭa*] to one another, they do make it impossible to maintain that the familiar text is so distinctively Andalusian as Calder makes out’ (Melchert 2003: 308).
- 115 They are better explained on the basis of the characteristic features of transmission in the Islamic lecture system; cf. Schoeler (2006: 28–61, esp. 33 and 44).
- 116 Cf. Motzki (2003) against Berg (2000).
- 117 Bernheim (1903: 181), identified this phenomenon as a recurring constant of historiography.
- 118 Cf. e.g. the critical remarks by Donner (1998: 62–3), esp. ‘the gradual penetration of a pre-existing monotheistic discourse by Qur’ānic phraseology over the course of a few centuries is exactly what we might expect to find, as the Qur’ān became gradually better known among Arabic-speaking monotheists in Syria’.
- 119 Rubin (1995; cf. esp. 1–3).
- 120 Cf. Rubin (1995: 3) and the critical remarks by Schoeler (1998).
- 121 Noth (1994: p. xi). See also the final sentence of his preface; it is quoted in this book as the last of the introductory quotations.
- 122 Noth (1994: 24; cf. 1968: 295). The passage is quoted in this book among the introductory quotations on p. xiv.
- 123 Blachère (1952).
- 124 See p. 3.
- 125 According to the subtitle (‘La biographie impossible de Mahomet’) of her article ‘Histoire et tradition sacrée’ (Chabbi 1986).
- 126 Cook (1983).
- 127 De Prémare (2002: 18ff., 30–1).

- 128 The three parts of his book deal with ‘The Merchants’, ‘The Conquerors’ and ‘The Scribes’.
- 129 Rodinson (1961: 12). Cf. Motzki (2000: p. xiii).
- 130 Ohlig (2000, 2007a, 2007b).
- 131 Ohlig (2000: 12).
- 132 The source in question is a west-Syriac chronicle by Thomas the Presbyter. He writes that in 634, ‘a battle between the Romans and Muḥammad’s Arabs’ took place. Cf. Hoyland (1997: 120).
- 133 Schölller (1996, 1998, 2000). Cf. p. 12.
- 134 Nagel (2008a, 2008b).
- 135 Particularly the substantial appendices (Nagel 2008a: 873–979).
- 136 Nagel (2008a: 835–43).
- 137 Ibid. 842.
- 138 Ibid. 728ff., 731ff.
- 139 ‘Die Vernichtung der Geschichte’ (ibid. 837–8); see also Nagel (1994), titled ‘Ḥadīṭ – oder die Vernichtung der Geschichte’ (‘Ḥadīṭ – Or, The Destruction of History’). The hypothesis behind this label is highly problematic and, in the generalized form Nagel advances it, simply wrong. A. Görke (forthcoming: 12ff.) has demonstrated that the chief witness Nagel (1994: 127) cites to support his idea (a *ḥadīṭ* according to which a believer is permitted to eat game while in a state of *iḥrām* as long as he did not personally hunt it) illustrates the exact opposite of what Nagel claims: it is, in fact, an old and widespread, *legal ḥadīṭ*. The first *historical* work to quote it is that by al-Wāqidi!
- 140 ‘[D]ie Herabwürdigung Mekkas zum schlechthin Falschen’ (2008a: 732).
- 141 Görke and Schoeler (2008).
- 142 Ibid. 9–10; Landau-Tasserón (1986, 2004).
- 143 Nagel (2008a: 349–50, 359–60, 368ff.).
- 144 Schölller (1996, 1998, 2000). Surprisingly, he notes his approval of Schölller (1998) elsewhere (Nagel 2008a: 843).
- 145 The account of these events included in the ‘Urwah corpus also corresponds only partially to that of later, ‘orthodox’ compilations: ‘Urwah seems to have been unaware of the battles with the Banū Qaynuqā’ and the Banū Naḍīr; cf. Görke and Schoeler (2008: 263).
- 146 Jones (1959). Cf. also pp. 73f., 77f.
- 147 Jones (1959: 274ff., 276).
- 148 Noth (1968: 295–6).
- 149 Nagel (2008a: 298, 904).
- 150 Cf. pp. 93–98 and now also Görke and Schoeler (2008: 121–2, 142ff., 183–4 and esp. 276–7).
- 151 Cf. p. 97.
- 152 Görke and Schoeler (2008: 142, 183–4).
- 153 Studies by Landau-Tasserón (1986), Lecker (1995a) and others have established that ‘the historical material’, as arranged by al-Wāqidi, ‘underwent considerable changes not only as a result of tendentious forgeries but also *through the mere process of redaction*’ (Landau-Tasserón 1986: 270; italics mine). Nagel, who quotes some of these studies, must have been aware of this. He occasionally lets on that he is aware of al-Wāqidi’s procedure, e.g. in the context of the latter’s linking of two events in which ‘Ā’iṣah allegedly lost her necklace (cf. above, pp. 89, 91 and 93 with n. 96) he

- calls the connection ‘quite clumsy’ (p. 365). Such observations, however, did not affect his overall evaluation of al-Wāqidi.
- 154 Cf. e.g. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 296), who lists a large number of novelistic *futūḥ* (as well as other) works circulating under al-Wāqidi’s name.
- 155 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 277–8).
- 156 Nagel (2008a: 896–9).
- 157 Kuhn (1975). H. R. Jauss (1974) introduced the concept of ‘paradigm shift’, developed by Kuhn on the basis of examples drawn from the natural sciences, to the study of literature. On the following remarks, cf. Jauss (1974: 275–6).
- 158 Cf. Peters (1991).
- 159 Crone (1995: 269 ff.); cf. Bennett (1998: 40).
- 160 Hoyland (1997: 4, 591ff.).
- 161 See n. 106.
- 162 In a chapter titled ‘Critique of the skeptical approach’, Donner (1998: 25–31) points out that the Islamic sources contain many often starkly diverging reports about schisms and doctrines of numerous early, heterodox sects and sub-sects: e.g. gnostic traditions in early ṣūfī literature. ‘These divergent traditions ... in not a few cases survived to our own days.’ Hence, Donner argues, it is *a priori* very likely that at least some traces of *all* important events and theological views of early Islamic history, including the genuinely authentic, have survived (p. 28).
- 163 Robinson (2003b: 122) concludes ‘one can no longer assume that all Prophetic *ḥadīth* are forged and that there is no authentic material in the *sīrah*’.
- 164 Al-Ġabbān (2003) = Ghabban (2008); cf. Hoyland (2006: 411).
- 165 The new evidence conclusively dispatches Koren and Nevo’s (1991: 100) claim that ‘nor do they [scil. the local sources before the eighth century] mention any caliph before Mu‘āwiyah, who by contrast is clearly a historical figure’.
- 166 Hoyland (1997: 688, no. 1); cf. Robinson (2003: 21).
- 167 Hoyland (1997: 694, no. 21).
- 168 Album and Goodwin (2002: 29–30; plate 26, no. 371). I owe this reference to Dr Lutz Ilisch, Tübingen.
- 169 Cf. *EF* III, 1979: 715–19 (s.v. Ibn al-Ash‘ath) and *EF* VII, 1993, 400–1 (s.v. Muḥammad b. al-Ash‘ath).
- 170 Hoyland (1997: 120); Hoyland (2000: 278).
- 171 Hoyland (2006: 406ff.).
- 172 F. Déroche (2009).
- 173 Von Bothmer *et al.* (1999: 46).
- 174 Peters (1991: 307).
- 175 Robinson (2003: 122).
- 176 H. Motzki and I developed the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis independently of each other at about the same time; J. H. Kramers and J. van Ess are among our predecessors. Normally, this method contents itself with demonstrating ‘that many traditions ... were not invented by the compilers, but have a history (including forgeries) which can be retraced to a certain point in time [in the case of traditions going back to ‘Urwah, often as far as back in the last third of the first/seventh century!].’ Cf. Motzki (2010: 235).
- 177 Noth (1968: 295; also 1971: 198).
- 178 In practice, Kister and some of his students also applied this method in some of their studies; cf. above p. 7f.
- 179 The authenticity of the selected traditions has of course to be demonstrated in each case.

- 180 Cf. also the fictitious dialogue, pp. 120–2.
- 181 It should be remembered that at least six traditions traced back to az-Zuhrī via Mūsā ibn ‘Uqbah (d. 141/758) contained in the Berlin fragment of Mūsā ibn ‘Uqbah (the manuscript contains 20 traditions in all; cf. Sachau 1904) can be found – traced back to az-Zuhrī via Ma‘mar ibn Rāšid – in the *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, part of ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ*. They are as follows: no. III = az-Zuhrī (1980: 101); no. IV = p. 103; no. VI = p. 66; no. VII = p. 94; no. XV = p. 94; no. XVI = p. 93. Thus, what we actually have here are traditions going back to az-Zuhrī. Schacht’s claim that ‘it is impossible to regard the original stock of the *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, consisting of traditions related by Mūsā on the authority of Zuhrī, as authentic statements by the latter’ (Schacht 1953: 292) is simply *wrong*. Cf. also the exemplary study by Motzki (1991a), who shows that numerous traditions and legal statements ascribed to az-Zuhrī, in both Mālik’s *Muwatṭaʿ* and ‘Abd ar-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ*, must in fact originate with him since they entered these compilations by independent paths of transmission.
- 182 This is of course only one – albeit a particularly safe – method to identify authentic ‘Urwah material. Another would involve compiling an exhaustive corpus of ‘Urwah’s traditions. Such a collection would substantially simplify the elimination of flawed material, alterations and forgeries. Von Stülpnagel made a first attempt almost 50 years ago; for ‘Urwah’s historical traditions, this has been tried by Duri (1983: 79–90) and more recently by Mursī (1995). The discovery and publication of many old sources containing ‘Urwah material unavailable to past scholars (e.g. ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, Ibn Abī Šaybah) meant that a new compilation was needed. Such a compilation has recently been published, cf. Goerke and Schoeler (2008).
- 183 Not only for historical traditions alone, but legal/ritualistic and exegetical material as well. These are the two groups of material we encounter in the corpus; cf. von Stülpnagel (1956: 54 and 122); Görke/Schoeler (2008: 14–17). For an outstanding legal tradition transmitted on the authority of ‘Urwah by both az-Zuhrī and Hišām ibn ‘Urwah see Juynboll (2007: 645, s.v. ‘Urwa b. az-Zubayr). Juynboll holds that ‘dating it to the middle of the first/seventh century at the earliest is plausible’.
- 184 As already shown by Motzki (1991b, 1991c).
- 185 An example for such a procedure can be found on pp. 109–11.
- 186 Cf. von Stülpnagel (1956: 117–20) and Schoeler and Görke (2007: 255–6).
- 187 Cf. pp 51, 52, 54. Cf. also von Stülpnagel (1956: 119), Görke and Schoeler (2008: 255–6, 285–6).
- 188 Cf. Paret (1954: 151).
- 189 He is reported to have been born between 23/643 and 29/649. By 63/683, he is already said to have destroyed his law books; cf. p. 21.
- 190 Cf. p. 6f.
- 191 Following the dispute between, on the one side, Nöldeke and Becker, and Lammens and Caetani on the other, the majority of scholars relegate most (or at least a substantial part of) events occurring before the *hiğrah* to the realm of legend. Yet, Nöldeke provided arguments in favour of the historicity of the ‘first *hiğrah*’; cf. Nöldeke (1914: 163).
- 192 Cf. Vansina (1985: 192–3).
- 193 Ibid., 192–3 and above, p. 113f.
- 194 Bernheim (1903: 175, 180–1).
- 195 Becker (1913: 269).
- 196 That is, we will apply the *isnād* analysis according to Schacht and Juynboll; cf. Schoeler (2006: 130 with additions on p. 141 = 1989b: 244).

- 197 We do not mean to say that *each* of al-Wāqidī's *isnāds* is false; the information he gives about his sources, however, is always to be regarded as suspect. On al-Wāqidī as compiler, cf. Lecker (1995a, 1995b).
- 198 Cf. p. 97f.
- 199 Cf. Chapter 3, n. 97.

1 The main Medinese transmitters

- 1 For the following, cf. Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: III/1, pp. vff.), Fück (1939: 2–3) and esp. Schoeler (2009: 40–2, 456); cf. also Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 237ff. and esp. 251ff.), Watt (1956: 338) and Lecker (1995b: 11–12).
- 2 al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī (1975: 64ff., 82ff.); Sprenger (1856: 317ff.); Goldziher (1890: 9ff., 195ff.); Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 54ff., 84ff.); Abbott (1957–72: II, 11ff.); Juynboll (1983: 21); Schoeler (2006: 117, 127–8, with additions on p. 128 = 1989b: 222, 234–5).
- 3 According to Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: II/2, 123), 'Abdallāh ibn 'Abbās (d. c. 68/687; cf. Sezgin 1967–84: I, 25) was said to have been seen carrying around 'tablets' (*alwāḥ*), on which he recorded the Prophet's deeds. The report is ascribed to Abū Rāfi'; on this alleged *mawlā* of the Prophet, cf. Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: XII, 100).
- 4 Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 311ff. no. 112) and al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī (1975: 86); cf. Schoeler (2006: 138 = 1989b: 247).
- 5 Cf. Horovitz (1927–8: pt 1, 535ff. = 2002: 1ff.); Duri (1983: 23ff.); von Stülpnagel (1956: 15): 'It was only in ... this generation that schools arose in which the transmission of knowledge was not left to chance but was the product of systematic work.'
- 6 Cf. Fück (1925: 1; also 1939: 2–3) and Watt (1983: 41).
- 7 Cf. Juynboll (1983: 9ff.); cf. also n. 16.
- 8 Other fields included Qur'ānic exegesis, jurisprudence and questions of religious ritual.
- 9 But cf. Juynboll (1983: 67).
- 10 According to Fück (1939: 2–3).
- 11 Cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 278–9) and Schoeler (in *EP*, 910ff.), with additional references; Horovitz (1927–8: pt 1, 542ff. = 2002: 14ff.); Duri (1983: 25ff., 76ff.); Watt (1953: 180ff.); Rosenthal (1968: 69, 130–1); M. al-A'zamī's introduction to 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (1981); von Stülpnagel (1956); Schoeler (2009: 41–4); Görke and Schoeler (2008).
- 12 Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: II, 37).
- 13 Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: VIII, 129, l. 5). Cf. von Stülpnagel (1956: 14–15).
- 14 Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 17, 102, no. 4574).
- 15 Al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī (1970: 237).
- 16 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 552); Abū Nu'aym (1932–8: II, 176); Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 164); aḏ-Ḍahabī (1985: IV, 431). Von Stülpnagel (1956: 15, n. 1) collected this and other references for the early use of the word *ḥadīṭ* and pointed out that it initially occurred only in the singular; cf. e.g. above, p. 25 with n. 80 and p. 28.
- 17 Cf. the references in aḏ-Ḍahabī (1985: IV, 424–5).
- 18 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 551).
- 19 The systematic arrangement of material according to subject matter, which was later applied to books divided into chapters. Cf. p. 27.
- 20 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 551).
- 21 Cf. Ahmed (1969).

- 22 An unsuccessful insurrection of the Medinese against the Umayyads in 63/683.
- 23 Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: V, 133); 'Abd ar-Razzāq (1970–2: XI, 425, no. 20902); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1985: IV, 426); Fischer (1980: 41); Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 165).
- 24 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 165); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1985: IV, 436); Fischer (1980: 47).
- 25 Cf. Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: III/1, p. xii); Schoeler (2006: 120 = 1989b: 226).
- 26 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 276).
- 27 Schoeler (2006: 117, 127–8, with additions on p. 141 = 1989b: 222, 234–5).
- 28 Cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: III, 417).
- 29 al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī (1975: 29–32); cf. also Schoeler (2006: 116–17, 125–6 with figure I.1 on p. 131 = 1989b: 221, 231–2).
- 30 al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī (1975: 58ff.); Ibn Abī Šaybah (1966–83: IX, 16–17).
- 31 al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī (1931: 60).
- 32 Cf. Fück (1925: 7) and von Stülpnagel (1956: 54).
- 33 Cf. pp. 31, and 103f.
- 34 Ibn Katīr (1932–9: IX, 101); Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfah (1941–3: II, 1747).
- 35 Von Stülpnagel (1956) also maintained that 'Urwah did not write a book 'in the strict sense' on *maḡāzī*; he stressed the relatively small number of traditions originating with him: 'Even if we grant that half of 'Urwah's work has been lost, his "book" would still be only a quarter of the size of Ibn Ishāq's work' (p. 115). 'In addition, the extant material hardly suggests that 'Urwah's book could have constituted a self-contained literary work' (p. 116).
- 36 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: *muqaddimah*, p. 5–6); numerous references in al-Kattānī (1964: 6ff. and esp. p. 9); cf. also Yāqūt (1923–5: VI, 399).
- 37 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 290).
- 38 Ibid. 91.
- 39 Ibid. 457.
- 40 Ibid. 288.
- 41 Ibid. 284–5.
- 42 Aḍ-Ḍahabī (1985: VI, 150); al-A'zamī has made an attempt to reconstruct it, cf. 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr (1981).
- 43 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–2: 110).
- 44 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 316).
- 45 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 28 = 1985: 202).
- 46 'Urwah's contemporary Abān ibn 'Uṭmān, another early authority on *maḡāzī*, is also said to have possessed such a book; cf. Schoeler (2006: 81 with n. 504 = 1992a: 32, with n. 165).
- 47 Some of the events reported by 'Abd ar-Razzāq in the *maḡāzī* section of his *Muṣannaḡ* on the authority of Ma'mar < az-Zuhrī < 'Urwah are indeed dated and located in a chronological framework, e.g. the Battle of Badr, 'Friday, the 16th or 17th of Ramaḡān' (without giving a year!) ('Abd ar-Razzāq 1970–2: 62) or Uḡud, 'Šawwāl, around six months after the attack on the Banū n-Naḡīr' ('Abd ar-Razzāq 1970–2: 76). It is, however, unclear whether the dates really go back to 'Urwah; they could just as easily go back to one of his transmitters, perhaps az-Zuhrī. Von Stülpnagel (1956: 60) notes: 'We are often left with the impression that the dates are later additions; sometimes, we can even prove it. At any rate, it is clear that 'Urwah was not much interested in chronological dates. Perhaps, he was not very well informed about the actual point in time a particular event occurred.' On chronology, cf. the excursus, pp. 83–91, and Görke and Schoeler (2008: 272 and Index).

- 48 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 99).
- 49 Cf. p. 27; also the excursus on pp. 89–91.
- 50 Fück (1925: 7); Loth (1869: 43) called him the ‘greatest transmitter of the younger generation [scil. of successors]’ and the ‘father of the school of Medina’.
- 51 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 88–9).
- 52 Ibid. 284–5.
- 53 Ibid. 280ff.; Horovitz (1927–8: pt 2, 33ff. = 2002: 50ff.); Fück (1925: 9–10); Rosenthal (1968: 130–1); Duri (1957 and 1983: 27ff. 95ff.); Lecker (1996).
- 54 Fischer (1980: 69).
- 55 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 622); aḏ-Ḍahabī (1985: V, 345); Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 77ff.).
- 56 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 232–3).
- 57 ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Hurmuz (d. 117/735 or 120/737–8); cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VI, 260).
- 58 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 633); Fischer (1980: 67); al-Ḥaḡīb al-Baḡdādī (1975: 59).
- 59 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1970–2, XI, 258); al-Fasawī (1981: I, 637); Fischer (1980: 67); al-Ḥaḡīb al-Baḡdādī (1975: 106–7).
- 60 He was supposed to be older than az-Zuhrī, yet transmitted from him; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 350).
- 61 Aḏ-Ḍahabī (1985: V, 332); Fischer (1980: 67); al-Fasawī (1981: I, 639).
- 62 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 520).
- 63 Fischer (1980: 68–9); Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 145); cf. Horovitz (1927–8: pt 2, 48 = 2002: 63).
- 64 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 518).
- 65 Aḏ-Ḍahabī (1985: V, 338); Fischer (1980: 69–70); Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 152).
- 66 Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 151); Ibn Sa’d (1987: 173). Cf. the comprehensive discussion of these reports in Lecker (1996: 28ff.). The reason for az-Zuhrī’s carelessness in transmitting *ḥadīṭ* quoted above (pressure of an ever increasing number of students) was put forward by Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 280–1).
- 67 Cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 59).
- 68 This type can be regarded as a precursor of the ‘literature of the school for the school’ which emerged one generation later; cf. n. 111 and pp. 29, 35f.
- 69 In Greek literature, both types are called *hypomnēma*.
- 70 On p. 31.
- 71 Cf. Lecker (1996: 24–5); Schoeler (2006: 122ff. with additions on p. 141 = 1989b: 228–31) and al-Fasawī (1981: I, 633); also Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 92).
- 72 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 125–6 = 1989b: 232).
- 73 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 641); Fischer (1980: 68); Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 86ff.).
- 74 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 643); Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 87ff.).
- 75 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 638); aḏ-Ḍahabī (1985: V, 334); Fischer (1980: 71); Ibn ‘Asākir (1982: 92).
- 76 Cf. p. 21f.
- 77 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 91).
- 78 Opposition against the written recording of traditions persisted in Baṣrah longer than in Medina; cf. Schoeler (2006: 114ff., 125–6 = 1989b: 219–20, 232–3).
- 79 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 114–15 = 1989b: 219).
- 80 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 62, 71, 76, 78, 80). The term *ḥadīṭ* occurs only in the singular; cf. above, p. 20 and p. 21, n. 16.
- 81 Similar to az-Zuhrī’s legal traditions; cf. Motzki (1991a: 6).
- 82 Cf. p. 22, with n. 47.
- 83 Cf. p. 27f.

- 84 Duri (1957: 7).
- 85 On him Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 288ff.); J. M. B. Jones (in *EF*, III, 810–11); Horovitz (1927–8: pt 2, 169ff. = 2002: 74ff.); Fück (1925); Abbott (1957–72: I, 87ff.); Robson (1955–6); Duri (1983: 33ff.); Rosenthal (1968: index, esp. pp. 394–5); Guillaume (1955: introd.); Sellheim (1967); Watt (1962, 1983); Al-Samuk (1978); Khoury (1983); Jarrar (1989); Muranyi (1991); Newby (1989: introd., esp. pp. 5–8); Fahd (1983).
- 86 Cf. the list in Ibn Hišām (1858–60: II, pp. lviiiiff.) and Khoury (1983: 11ff.).
- 87 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 279).
- 88 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 146).
- 89 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 284).
- 90 Cf. Fück (1925: 29–30, 42, esp. n. 74); Robson (1955–6: 452–3).
- 91 Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83: VII, 382).
- 92 Ibn ‘Adī (1988: VI, 104); Ibn Hišām (1858–60: II, p. xvii, l. 15).
- 93 Ibn ‘Adī (1988: IV, 40, art. Šuraḥbīl ibn Sa‘d); aḡ-Ḍahabī (1963: II, 266); Fück (1925: 29, n. 24 with additional refs and p. 31).
- 94 For large parts of the material making up the *Kitāb al-mubtada’*, this allegation seems to be correct; see the *isnāds* in aḡ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVI, 12 and VI, 10); cf. Fück (1925: 13, n. 2).
- 95 Cf. Fück (1925: 29, n. 24) and Robson (1955–6: 452ff.). Fück’s assumption seems to me to be the more probable: behind these anonymous informants, he suspects ‘lesser or unknown people, whose name he did not necessarily need to record’. We must always keep in mind that the requirements for an *isnād* were not nearly as strict in Ibn Ishāq’s time as they would later become for the traditionists.
- 96 Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83: VII, 384) = Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 40).
- 97 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 37).
- 98 Ibid. 38.
- 99 That is, he quoted people’s ‘books’ in his own ‘books’ and later transmitted them as if he had actually heard them read out to him.
- 100 Ibid. 36.
- 101 Cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VI, 306); Muranyi (1985: 30ff.).
- 102 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Kitāb at-tamhīd*, quoted after Muranyi (1985: 35).
- 103 Aḡ-Ḍahabī (1955–8: I, 163); Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 45).
- 104 Even though Ma‘mar’s work is only available as transmitted and redacted by ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, the comparison is valid: we can confidently rule out the possibility that Ma‘mar’s book was better structured and more carefully arranged than his student’s revised version.
- 105 We should add that in one section of his work (az-Zuhrī 1980: 74–5), Ma‘mar provides a short chronological sketch of the most important incidents in the life of the Prophet and the Qur’ānic material revealed on these occasions. He frequently gives exact dates or the amount of time elapsed between events, quoting ‘somebody who heard ‘Ikrimah [d. 105/723] say’.
- 106 For the most part, the material is chronologically ordered. Where appropriate, we also find a genealogical or factual arrangement; cf. Fück (1925: 38).
- 107 In several cases, Watt (in 1962: 27ff. and 1983: 32ff.) subsumes these introductory remarks without *isnād* under the heading of ‘*maqāzī* material’ and counts them towards his postulated basic framework. He regards it as generally historically true in contrast to the following separate traditions and anecdotes, which he assumes frequently to be spurious (cf. above, p. 6). However, Watt seems to overlook the fact

- that Ibn Ishāq often extracted the information contained in this ‘*mağāzī* material’ from the very tradition(s) following it (except for the chronology; cf. above, pp. 89–91). This comes out very clearly in his introduction to the Battle of Badr (Ibn Hišām 1858–60: I, 427–8 = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 289) quoted by Watt himself: most of the content of what Watt calls ‘*mağāzī* material’ has been culled from the following tradition (with a collective *isnād*: ‘*an az-Zuhrī*, etc.), some of it verbatim. The situation is even more clear-cut in the chapter on the Battle of Uḥud (Ibn Hišām 1858–60: I, 555–6 = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 370–1) which Watt (1983: 38) also quotes. The ‘*sīrah* material’ in this case consists of nothing more than a tradition (again with a collective *isnād*: ‘*an az-Zuhrī*, etc.). Also, we have to keep in mind that his redactor Ibn Hišām often shortened Ibn Ishāq’s *isnāds* at the beginning of chapters (i.e. exactly where Watt finds his *mağāzī* material). These *isnāds* are preserved in the parallel transmission by aṭ-Ṭabarī on the authority of Ibn Ishāq. Examples: Ibn Hišām (1858–60: I, 933, -5) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 628) = aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1710) = al-Ṭabarī 1990: 67); Ibn Hišām (1858–60: I, p. 972, -5 = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 659) = aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901, ser. 1, p. 1756) = al-Ṭabarī 1990: 116); cf. also the remarks of Fück (1953: 196ff.) and Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 253, n. 6).
- 108 Fück (1925: 106).
- 109 Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83: VII, 383) = Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 40).
- 110 Horovitz (1927–8: pt 2, 181 = 2002: 89); cf. also Fück (1925: 38ff.).
- 111 In some previous publications, I have interpreted Ibn Ishāq’s *Kitāb al-mağāzī* and related *muṣannaf* works as *hypomnēmata* (Schoeler 2006: 33–4, 70–1, with additions on pp. 85–6, 79, n. 483 = 1985: 211–12; 1992a: 15–16 and 29, n. 146; see also Günther 1992b: 411–12). In the light of the argument presented above, I want to revise my point of view. A category of texts somewhere between *hypomnēma* and *syngamma*, texts which were ‘neither lecture notes nor literature’ (Jaeger 1912: 137), already existed in antiquity: Jaeger identifies the works of Aristotle, which were on the one hand ‘elaborated in detail’ (p. 135) but on the other ‘not intended for publication in wider, literary lay circles’ (p. 136) as ‘literature of/from the school for the school ... published ... through lectures’ (p. 147). Thus, Aristotle’s *Topics* are ‘not lecture notes or a collection of drafts’, but ‘a *gramma* meant to be recited in front of the students’ (p. 145). There could not be any better description of the character of Ibn Ishāq’s *Kitāb al-mağāzī*.
- 112 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 382); Muranyi (1991).
- 113 In Ibn Ishāq (1978: 23).
- 114 Ibid. 244.
- 115 Already at this point, we encounter the differentiation of teaching into various types, which were systematized in later handbooks and indicated in an *isnād* by certain terms (*alfāz*): *imlā’* (dictation), *qirā’ah* (reading aloud (mostly) of students to a teacher), *samā’* (lecture); cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 58ff.).
- 116 This book – more frequently called *Kitāb al-mağāzī* (in a wider sense) or *Kitāb as-sīrah* – allegedly consisted of three parts: (1) the *Kitāb al-mubtada’*, covering events from the creation up to Muḥammad; (2) the *Kitāb al-mab’at*, on Muḥammad’s ‘mission’, i.e. his Meccan period up to the *hiğrah*; and (3) the *Kitāb al-mağāzī*, on the Prophet’s campaigns, i.e. basically his Medinese period up to his death. A supplementary fourth part, the *Kitāb al-ḥulafā’*, contained information about the reigns of the caliphs until al-Manşūr. Cf. the quotation from Ibn ‘Adī on p. 29, above, and Yāqūt (1923–5: VI, 401); Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–2: 92–3); see also Fück (1925: 34ff., 39ff.) and Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 289). Newby (1989: 33–241) has attempted

- to reconstruct the *Kitāb al-mubtada'* (in English trans.). The author is unaware of a large part of the recent literature on the character of early Islamic tradition (including the important dissertation on Ibn Ishāq by Al-Samuk). The book's weaknesses and methodological faults have been criticized by Conrad (1993) and Jarrar (1992).
- 117 Al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī (1931: I, 220–1).
- 118 Ibn Sa'd (1987: 401ff.). The text does not appear in the Leiden edition which has a gap in this place; cf. Zetterstéen in Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: V, p. v).
- 119 On this and the following dates, cf. Fück (1925: 32–3).
- 120 Cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 95).
- 121 The brother of the caliph al-Manṣūr, at the time governor of the Ġazīrah.
- 122 Fück (1925: 33, n. 46) pointed out that, instead of al-Ḥīrah, the correct location would have been al-Hāšimīyah, where al-Manṣūr resided before settling in Baġdād. However, al-Hāšimīyah is very close to al-Ḥīrah (it lies between al-Ḥīrah and Kūfah).
- 123 Kūfah is very close to al-Ḥīrah.
- 124 Aḍ-Ḍahabī (1985: VII, 48); Yāqūt (1923–5: VI, 399); Ibn Qutaybah (1969: 492).
- 125 In writing, cf. p. 26f.
- 126 According to Jarrar (1989: 1ff., esp. 32ff.), the original title was *Kitāb as-sūrah*.
- 127 The question whether Ibn Ishāq produced the (syngrammatical) *Kitāb al-maġāzī* before the caliphal commission is still a matter of debate; cf. Fück (1925: 33, n. 47); Horovitz (1927–8: pt 2, 172 = 2002: 79–80); Abbott (1957–72: I, 89) and Sellheim (1967: 39–40).
- 128 Cf. n. 111.
- 129 Nyberg (1939: 349).
- 130 Cf. pp. 29, 86, 88, 89.
- 131 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 198).
- 132 Ibn 'Adī (1988: VI, 112) = Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 39).
- 133 Goldziher (1890: 204) had already correctly indentified the 'useless books' as 'profane literature', which existed before religious literature. What he mainly had in mind were reports on ancient Arab history and similar material (as discussed on page 30, above) compiled on behalf of the Umayyads. Since these collections, as Goldziher later notes (p. 206), also included texts on the life of the Prophet, his identification is, in my opinion, not entirely correct.
- 134 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 70–1, 72–3, 81–2, with additions on 85–6 = 1992a: 15, 17ff., 32).
- 135 For the following cf. Schoeler (2009: 54–64).
- 136 Cf. e.g. Abbott (1957–72: I, 9ff. and II, 18ff.).
- 137 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–2: 89); on 'Abīd see Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 260).
- 138 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 401).
- 139 al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī (1975: 35).
- 140 Ibid. 41; ad-Dārimī (1966: I, 122).
- 141 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–2: 89); Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 261). For a discussion of this account cf. Lecker (1995c: 86) and (1999: 412).
- 142 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 366ff.).
- 143 Ibn an-Nadīm (1871–2: 91); cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 367).
- 144 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 277–8).
- 145 Al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār (1972: 331ff.).
- 146 Al-Balāḍurī (1883: 172); Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 255).
- 147 Cf. Jarrar (1989: 21ff.).
- 148 Cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 279); also Horovitz (1927–8: pt 1, 548ff. = 2002: 24ff.); Buhl (1930: 306). A German translation of the letters can be found in von Stülpnagel

- (1956: 61ff.); cf. also Sprenger (1869: I, 356ff.; II, 42ff.; III, 142ff.). We have a closer look at one of these letters on p. 103f. Horovitz (1927–8: pt 1, 550 = 2002: 26) noted that ‘Urwah’s letters represent ‘the oldest monuments of Arabic historical prose’. However, we should not forget that in the process of the transmission of the documents through the lecture system, changes in the original wording, cuts, etc. could have occurred. Cf. Chapter 3, n. 147.
- 149 Abū l-Farağ al-‘Iṣfahānī (1285 AH: XIX, 59); cf. Jarrar (1989: 24ff.).
- 150 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 2, pp. 428 and 1269).
- 151 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 123–4 with additions on 141 = 1989b: 229–30).
- 152 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 640); Fischer (1980: 69).
- 153 Al-Fasawī (1981: I, 632).
- 154 Cf. n. 148.
- 155 Cf. n. 130; also Jarrar (1989: 82).
- 156 On p. 28.
- 157 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: III, 323); Jarrar (1989: 82–3).
- 158 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: III, 324); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: II, 91).
- 159 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: III, 324).
- 160 Cf. p. 32f.
- 161 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 135).
- 162 Ibn ‘Adī (1988: III, 340); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: II, 192).
- 163 Al-Ḥaṭīb al-Bağdādī (1931: I, 220–1); cf. Schoeler (2006: 71 with n. 412 = 1992a: 16 with n. 75).
- 164 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 135); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: II, 192).
- 165 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 135).
- 166 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 297); Jarrar (1989: 83 and index).
- 167 Al-Bakkā’ī rarely reports on the authority of teachers other than Ibn Iṣḥāq; references can be found in the introduction of Ibn Hišām (1858–60: II, p. xxxiv).
- 168 Ibn Hišām uses relatively little material from the *mubtada*’ section, e.g. the genealogy of the Prophet at the beginning of the work; cf. Al-Samuk (1978: 85, n. 4).
- 169 On the titles *Kitāb al-mağāzī* and *Sīrah*, cf. Jarrar (1989: 1ff.).
- 170 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: I, 4 = Ibn Iṣḥāq (1980: 691).
- 171 Cf. the extensive remarks by Fück (1925: 35); also above, p. 33f.
- 172 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 146).
- 173 Guillaume (1960). The author also provides an overview of the contents of the work.
- 174 Muranyi (1991).
- 175 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 383). This explains what Al-Samuk (1978: 84, 94) refers to as al-‘Uṭāridī’s ‘discontinuous presentation’ of his material.
- 176 Cf. the references in Muranyi (1991: 219ff.).
- 177 Schoeler (1986: 124–5).
- 178 On the transmission of the ‘Uṭāridī recension, cf. Muranyi (1991: 225ff.).
- 179 The distinction can be justified on the grounds of the nature and availability of the material: from the third/ninth century onward, numerous books are preserved, which were for the most part written or compiled by known authors at a particular time and passed on as a whole. For the first/seventh and the second/eighth centuries, most of the available material consists ‘only’ of traditions collected and edited substantially later. Cf. Cook (1992: 23).
- 180 Cf. the introduction to Ibn Hišām (1858–60: II, p. xl). On the transmission of Ibn Hišām’s *Sīrah* in Spain, cf. Jarrar (1989: 83, 289ff.).
- 181 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 50–1 = 1989a: 51).

- 182 Cf. Stauth (1969: 11, 14–15) and Schoeler (1990: no. 30).
- 183 Printed in Wüstenfeld's 'critical remarks', cf. Ibn Hišām (1858–60: II, 1–2).
- 184 Aḍ-Ḍahabī (1985: XII, 48–9); Jarrar (1989: index).
- 185 Together with his brothers Muḥammad and Aḥmad (cf. aḍ-Ḍahabī 1985: XIII, 46–7), he is to be regarded as the main transmitter of Ibn Hišām's *Ṣīrah*; cf. Jarrar (1989: 31, 83–4).
- 186 Aḍ-Ḍahabī (1985: XVI, 39); Jarrar (1989: 31, 83–4). He was Abū Saʿīd al-Barqī's main transmitter.
- 187 As-Suhaylī (1967: I, 36).
- 188 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 298); Jarrar (1989: 176ff.).
- 189 Cf. Wüstenfeld's 'critical remarks' in Ibn Hišām (1858–60: II, 1) and his introduction (p. xlix).
- 190 Namely 'Abd ar-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* and the redactions of Ibn Iṣḥāq's *Maǧāzī*.
- 191 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 91).
- 192 Ibid. 96.
- 193 Cf. Schoeler (2006: 30ff. with additions on 43, 114ff., 125–6 = 1985: 206–7 and 1989b: 219–20, 232–3).
- 194 Those of his writings produced due to the 'court impulse', if we are to believe the traditional reports, had to be proper books. However, all of them were lost.
- 195 Vansina (1985: 12–13, 160).
- 196 Cf. p. 106.
- 197 Cf. von Stülpnagel (1956: 119). In fact, her share was probably not that large: some *isnāds* breaking off with 'Urwah were 'raised' back to 'Ā'īṣah at a later stage of transmission, sometimes without any intention to commit forgery. Examples can be found on pp. 51 and 58f. and in Motzki (1991a: 36ff.).
- 198 'Urwah's letters to 'Abd al-Malik are not known to us from archives; they were introduced into the lecture tradition by 'Urwah's son Hišām, whence they reached aṭ-Ṭabarī and others.
- 199 According to the definition of Cobet (1988: 227); cf. also Vansina (1985: 68ff.).
- 200 Cf. Vansina (1985: 117).
- 201 'Disciplined' that is, in so far as its exponents: (1) proceeded systematically, e.g. by questioning several witnesses; (2) increasingly stressed chronology; and (3) increasingly used written records to aid their memory.
- 202 Cf. the list in Khoury (1983: 11ff.).

2 The text in the transmission process

- 1 The term was coined by Andrae (1912: 5).
- 2 M.J. Kister has published two interesting articles on philological details; cf. Kister (1965, 1968).
- 3 Sellheim (1987).
- 4 Juynboll (1994).
- 5 Motzki (1993).
- 6 Rubin (1993a).
- 7 The final outcome of his study, which ignores a large part of the relevant secondary literature (Andrae, Lohmann, Widengren) is also somewhat disappointing (cf. the summary on pp. 12–13). A detailed discussion of his findings is not necessary here; it will suffice to correct its most serious errors. (1) Sellheim is not familiar with the version of the Zuhri recension transmitted via Ma'mar and 'Abd ar-Razzāq. In its

extant form, it is at least as old as the oldest version received by Ibn Ishāq from Wahb ibn Kaysān which we find in Ibn Hišām (LV III) and it already represents the full text of the Zuhri recension (LV I). Thus, Sellheim's speculation about a redaction of a substantial part of this recension (roughly the part after the first four sentences) at a later date and under the influence of the Ibn Ishāq versions (p. 7) falls flat. (2) As for the recension received by Ibn Ishāq from Wahb ibn Kaysān (LV III), Sellheim does not realize that Ibn Hišām consciously shortened the text in certain places (e.g. Muḥammad toying with the idea of committing suicide) according to a principle he explicitly set out in his introduction (cf. above p. 32). Nor does he realize that al-'Uṭāridī's text was damaged in places. These two facts explain most of the differences between the various Ibn Ishāq versions. There is thus no need to have recourse to the 'oral transmission' Sellheim holds responsible for all divergences. (3) Sellheim regards the absence of the suicide wish in LV I in the *fatrah*-annex in al-Buḥārī and Muslim as typical of the 'ḥadīṭ versions'. This is not the case; in fact, its absence depends on the respective transmitters of *az-Zuhri* (the *fatrah* annex is consistently missing in 'Uqayl's transmission; we generally find it fully – including the suicide motif – only in Ma'mar's transmission; there is, however, one example of the full text with the suicide motif in Yūnus' transmission). This is confirmed by the fact that al-Buḥārī actually retains the *fatrah* annex with the suicide motif in another chapter of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in which he follows the 'Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma'mar transmission, i.e. the *Kitāb at-ta'bīr* of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī 1978: pt 26, 195ff., no. 6982; here: p. 204, bottom). So it was not the compilers of the canonical *ḥadīṭ* collections, but the redactor of Ibn Ishāq's biography of the Prophet, Ibn Hišām, who objected to this passage and removed it! On the other hand, Sellheim deserves praise for introducing in Arabic and Islamic studies (pp. 13ff.) a fascinating discovery of the Scandinavian studies expert K. von See. This scholar pointed to an exact parallel to the reports about Muḥammad's first revelation experience in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* (completed in 731) by the Venerable Bede (d. 735); cf. above p. 62f.

- 8 Nöldeke (1909–38: I, 78ff.).
- 9 Buhl (1930: 134–8).
- 10 Andrae (1912).
- 11 Bell (1934a).
- 12 Widengren (1958: 258ff.).
- 13 Paret (1980: 47ff.).
- 14 Lohmann (1968).
- 15 Rudolph (1966: 315–20).
- 16 Von Stülpnagel (1956: 130–6).
- 17 Watt (1953: 39–52, 180ff.).
- 18 Sprenger (1869: 331–54).
- 19 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151–2 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 105ff.).
- 20 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1147–52 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 67–73) = aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 138–9).
- 21 Az-Zuhri (1980: 43ff.); 'Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 262, nos. 3377–8 under *Sūrat al-muddattir*). In the *Tafsīr*, 'Abd ar-Razzāq only includes an abridged version of the report (corresponding to sections 9–12 of the outline on p. 39f.).
- 22 Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: I/1, 129–30).
- 23 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 52ff., no. 3; pt 18, 369ff., no. 4953; pt 26, 196ff., no. 6982; in shortened form: pt 13, 171, no. 3392, and pt 18, 379–80, nos. 4955ff).
- 24 Muslim (1972: II, 197ff.).

- 25 At-Tirmidī (1983: V, 257). On this and other versions, cf. the corpus.
- 26 N.N. denotes the numerous transmitters reporting the *ḥadīṭ* on the authority of az-Zuhrī; cf. the Corpus, p. 124f.
- 27 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 43ff.).
- 28 (Bracketed) elements marked with a * occur in aṭ-Ṭabarī's version (LV II) only; those with ** occur in the other long versions (LV I) only. Cf. p. 44 for the two versions.
- 29 On the meaning of *taḥannuṭ*, cf. Kister (1968).
- 30 The terms 'taḥannuṭ narration', 'iqra' narration' and 'ufuq narration' were coined by Andrae and Lohmann; cf. above, p. 40.
- 31 'You make close your ties of relationship (by kind behaviour to your relatives), you tell the information truthfully ...' (*la-taṣīlu r-rahīm wa-taṣḍuqu l-ḥadīṭ* ...). Rhetorical figure of *parallelismus membrorum*. Cf. Kister (1965).
- 32 In aṭ-Ṭabarī's version (LV II), the elements appear in the following order: 1—2—4—10—3—5—6—7—7a.
- 33 Cf. p. 73.
- 34 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: XII, 127).
- 35 Ibid. II, 37.
- 36 The term *ufuq* legend was coined by T. Andrae; cf. above, p. 40 with n. 38.
- 37 As Andrae (1912: 16) has correctly pointed out.
- 38 Andrae (1912: 5–6). He refers to Sprenger (1869: I, 334), who already uses the term 'conglomerate'.
- 39 Lohmann calls them 'pericopes'. The division of the Ḥadīḡah narration into two parts is mine.
- 40 Lohmann (1968: 417, 441, 449).
- 41 On pp. 133 and 142.
- 42 Andrae (1912: 13). Sprenger's position, which Andrae refers to, is ambiguous: in one place, he claims that az-Zuhrī combined three or four of 'Urwah's traditions into a conglomerate. In another place, he (probably correctly) assumes that the tradition was first redacted by 'Urwah himself and not by one of his students (Sprenger 1869: I, 334, 340).
- 43 Ibn Hiṣām (1858–60: 151 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 105ff.); Ibn Ishāq (1978: 120, 132); at-Tirmidī (1983: V, 257).
- 44 Al-Balāḡurī (n.d.: I, 105, no. 191).
- 45 Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: I/1, 129).
- 46 The three additional sentences appended to the Balāḡurī version (*wa-'araḡa la-hū ḡibrīl ... ibn arba'in sanatan*) do not belong to the tradition.
- 47 Al-Azraqī (1858: 427).
- 48 Al-Balāḡurī (n.d.: I, 108, no. 198).
- 49 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1155 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 76) and 1321 AH: XXX, 78); cf. above, p. 43f.
- 50 On Ibn Ishāq's and al-Wāqidī's abridgements, see pp. 48 and 46.
- 51 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 43ff.).
- 52 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 232–3); Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83: I, 48ff.).
- 53 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 228); al-Wāḡidī (1994: IV, 527–8).
- 54 Al-Wāḡidī (1994: XI, 395); Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 519).
- 55 Muslim (1972: II, 197ff. here 204); al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: IX, 5–6).
- 56 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 52ff., no. 3; here 61). The passage in question reappears in places where al-Buḡārī adduces the tradition (also) on the authority of 'Abd ar-Razzāq < Ma'mar (Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī 1978: pt 26, 196ff., no. 6982; here 204–5).

- 57 Abū 'Awānah (1362–3 AH: I, 110ff.).
- 58 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 52ff., no. 3). The short version with the full beginning can be found in pt 18, 379, no. 4955.
- 59 Al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 139). Cf. above, pp. 49 and 70ff.
- 60 Muslim (1972: I, 205).
- 61 Ibid. II, 197ff.
- 62 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 13, 171, no. 3392, and pt 18, 380, no. 4957).
- 63 Otherwise, we would have to assume that another transmitter added the missing beginning, perhaps Yaḥya on the basis of the Yūnus version?
- 64 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 208). The complete 'Uqayl version is always traced back to Yaḥyā ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Bukayr, but the latter also seems to have been aware of the version with the fragmentary beginning. However, this assumption only holds true if the Yaḥyā listed in the relevant *isnād* in al-Bayhaqī (al-Bayhaqī 1985: II, 139) is indeed Yaḥyā ibn 'Abdallāh ibn Bukayr.
- 65 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 369ff., no. 4953).
- 66 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1978: pt 26, 196ff., no. 6982).
- 67 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1147–8 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 67ff.) and 1321 AH: XXX, 138–9).
- 68 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: X, 403); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: IV, 265); Ibn 'Adī (1988: VII, 2479).
- 69 Cf. pp. 44, 49, 70.
- 70 Aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 206–7).
- 71 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 333).
- 72 Ibid. IX, 257.
- 73 Ibid. 76.
- 74 Al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 108, no. 198).
- 75 Note that this *isnād* differs from the one which accompanies the *beginning* of the same tradition!
- 76 Since the new *isnād* occurs independently in the transmissions of two of az-Zuhrī's students, it must have originated separately with az-Zuhrī himself. The following tradition by az-Zuhrī is also transmitted separately by other Zuhrī students; cf. p. 73, with n. 240.
- 77 Cf. p. 70ff.
- 78 Following Juynboll's terminology, we will call branching points of the second and third degree 'partial common links', PCL.
- 79 That is, in his (edited) *Muṣannaf*; cf. az-Zuhrī (1980: 43ff.).
- 80 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 232–3).
- 81 Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83: I, 48ff.).
- 82 Al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 135ff.).
- 83 Abū Nu'aym (1950: 168ff.).
- 84 Al-Wāḥidī (n.d.: 5).
- 85 The 'Abd ar-Razzāq sub-versions transmitted by al-Buḡḡarī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal are not included in our analysis, because they do not represent the 'Abd ar-Razzāq transmission in its original form but are mixed with other transmissions ('Uqayl, Yūnus).
- 86 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-'Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 382); Muranyi (1991).
- 87 Ibn Ishāq (1978: 120, 132).
- 88 At-Tirmidī (1983: V, 257).
- 89 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 466); Muranyi (1991).
- 90 On p. 49.

- 91 Al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 108, no. 198); aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1155 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 76 and 1321 AH: XXX, p. 78).
- 92 Al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 105, no. 191); Ibn Sa’d (1905–40: I/1, 129).
- 93 Al-Azraqī (1858: 427).
- 94 Cf. p. 45.
- 95 Cf. pp. 42 and 46.
- 96 Ibn Sa’d (1905–40: I/1, 129).
- 97 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151 = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 105)); Ibn Ishāq (1978: 120, 132); at-Tirmidī (1983: V, 257).
- 98 Cf. pp. 59ff. and 70ff.
- 99 A further apparent addition – three additional sentences at the end of the tradition (*wa-‘araḍa ... ilā arba’in sanah*) – is actually not part of the tradition.
- 100 Al-Balāḍurī (1936: 18 (Engl.)).
- 101 Cf. pp. 42 and 43f.
- 102 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 44–5). This Ma‘mar sub-version quoted by ‘Abd ar-Razzāq is very similar in wording to the Yūnus sub-version quoted by Abū ‘Awānah. In ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 267, no. 3377), the text has been abridged and partially paraphrased.
- 103 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 78); the text in 1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1155, differs slightly from this version.
- 104 At-Tirmidī (1983: V, 257).
- 105 Ibn Ishāq (1978: 120, 132); cf. above, p. 45.
- 106 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 105).
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151ff.) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 105ff.); cf. above, p. 59ff.
- 109 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, 1147–8 and 1149ff. = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 67ff. and 70ff.).
- 110 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1147, and 1321 AH: XXX, 138).
- 111 Cf. p. 44.
- 112 Cf. p. 43.
- 113 Muslim (1972: II, 204–5).
- 114 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 55, no. 3; here 58); the former variant (*varḡufu fu’ādu-hū*) also occurs in the short version covering the said text: Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 13, 171, no. 3392).
- 115 Al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 139).
- 116 Ibid.
- 117 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 13, 171, no. 3392, and pt 18, 380, no. 4957).
- 118 Ibid., pt 1, 52ff., no. 3.
- 119 Ibid., pt 18, 379, no. 4955.
- 120 Cf. the discussion on p. 43 above.
- 121 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 44).
- 122 al-Wāḥidī (n.d.: 5–6).
- 123 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 233).
- 124 Abū Nu‘aym (1950: 169).
- 125 On its implications, cf. Graf (1944–53: I, 34).
- 126 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 57–8, no. 3).
- 127 Aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 206, no. 1467).
- 128 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 375, no. 4953).
- 129 Ibid., pt 26, 204, no. 6982.
- 130 Al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 139).
- 131 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 153).

- 132 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1978: pt 1, 53, no. 3). In the mixed transmission according to ʿUqayl + Yūnus (pt 18, 370, no. 4593), al-Buḡārī has *aṣ-ṣādiqah*; the mixed transmission according to ʿUqayl + Maʿmar contains both variants, once *aṣ-ṣādiqah* (pt 18, 379, no. 4956) and once *aṣ-ṣāliḡah* (pt 26, 198, no. 6982).
- 133 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1148 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 69 and aṭ-Ṭabarī 1321 AH: XXX, 139).
- 134 Muslim (1972: II, 205).
- 135 Al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 141) even notes that al-Buḡārī, unlike other compilers, quoted in his ʿUqayl version the full initial passage missing elsewhere (or substituted with a different version; cf. above, p. 70): *wa-zāda fī awwal ḡadīṭ ʿUrwah ʿan ʿĀʿiṣah mā rawaynā-hu ʿan Maʿmar ʿan az-Zuhrī*.
- 136 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1978: pt 26, 204–5). Like Muslim, Ibn Ḥaḡar therefore never knew the complete Yūnus version with *fatrah* annex (as found in Abū ʿAwānah).
- 137 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1984–5, VII, 205); Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 102).
- 138 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1984–5: III, 11).
- 139 Praise expressed in parallel phrases; rhetorical figure of *parallelismus membrorum*. Cf. Kister (1965).
- 140 Ibn Saʿd (1905–40: I/1, 130).
- 141 Cf. p. 21.
- 142 As proposed by Andrae (1912: 6–7).
- 143 Cf. the ʿUrwah traditions analysed on pp. 82ff. and 100ff. Long historical traditions on the authority of ʿUrwah are very frequent, e.g. in ʿAbd ar-Razzāq (az-Zuhrī 1980). Some examples on the authority of az-Zuhrī < ʿUrwah: *ibid.* 50ff. (Ḥudaybiyah), 76ff. (Uḡud), 96ff. (the first *ḡiḡrah* to Abyssinia). In Ibn Abī Ṣaybah’s *maḡāzī* chapter of his *Muṣannaḡ*, they are also fairly frequent (and often reported on the authority of Hiṣām ibn ʿUrwah < ʿUrwah). Cf von Stülpnagel (1956: 33, 36) and esp. Görke and Schoeler (2008: 18ff.).
- 144 A member of the Zubayrid family; cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 317ff.).
- 145 Az-Zubayr ibn Bakkār’s uncle; Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 271ff.).
- 146 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 266).
- 147 *Ibid.* 396.
- 148 Az-Zubayr b. Bakkār (1999: 419, no. 720) = Abū l-Faraḡ al-Iṣfahānī (1285 AH: III, 14).
- 149 Cf. Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 30).
- 150 Al-ʿUṭāridī (1978: 135); aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 127–8). The narration follows aṭ-Ṭabarī’s text. Except for the fact that Ḥadiḡah herself is the narrator of the ʿUṭāridī report (cf. the *isnād*), there are few differences between the two versions.
- 151 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 94); Khoury (1986).
- 152 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 284–5).
- 153 Al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 142–3), reproduced also in as-Suyūṭī (1967: I, 231–2, 233) and Ibn Kaṭīr (1932–9: III, 13–14). Both texts are accompanied by incorrect *isnāds*, which can be explained with a misunderstanding due to an unclear expression in al-Bayhaqī’s reference. This or a very similar version is the source for al-Yaʿqūbī’s report about the first revelation experience (quoted without *isnād*) (al-Yaʿqūbī 1960: II, 22–3; cf. above, p. 55 with n. 158). The connection can be inferred from al-Yaʿqūbī’s use of a characteristic motif (the carpet) and the corresponding terminology. Clearly dependent on LV IV is Ibn Sayyid an-Nās’s almost literally identical parallel tradition (Ibn Sayyid an-Nās 1986: I, 112), which, however, has a different (incorrectly transmitted or forged) *isnād* leading back to ʿAbdallāh ibn Abī Bakr as the original informant.

- 154 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1978: pt 1, 54). The first part – with few variants but slightly more elaborate – is also quoted in Ibn Kaṭīr (1980: IV, 249).
- 155 We also find a better attested report by ʿUrwah about Gabriel’s introduction of the prayer ritual in Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 158 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 112). On this occasion, however, it is not linked to the *iqra*’ tradition.
- 156 The first paragraph of the following fragments follows the somewhat more detailed version in Ibn Kaṭīr, who gives the following *isnād*: Ibn Wahb < Ibn Lahīʿah < Abū l-Aswad < ʿUrwah < ʿĀʾiṣah. The second paragraph follows Ibn Ḥaḡar’s version.
- 157 Or Ġiyād, a place in Mecca. Cf. the relevant article in Yāqūt (1866–70).
- 158 According to Andrae (1912: 16). He makes his statement in connection with the report as given in al-Yaʿqūbī (1960: II, 22), which obviously depends on our or a very similar version of the story (cf. n. 153). Al-Yaʿqūbī’s text runs as follows: ‘He [scil. Gabriel] brought him a (short-pile, yellow-green) carpet (*durnūkan*), one of the carpets of Paradise, and had him [scil. Muhammad] sit on it. He told him that he was the messenger of God and that he brought him (knowledge) from God. He taught him: “Recite in the name of your Lord” ...’
- 159 However, SV IV does not explicitly confirm this secondary motif for the Ibn Lahīʿah recension.
- 160 Up to this point, this recension agrees with LV II.
- 161 Rubin (1993a: 219) lists parallel traditions.
- 162 The short version (SV IV) displays remarkable similarities to a tradition we discuss (pp. 59–62), which possibly can also be traced back to ʿUrwah (LV III): both share certain traits in the description of the angelic vision (a more elaborate rendition of the *ufuq* narration).
- 163 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1978: pt 1, 54).
- 164 Abū Nuʿaym (1950: 174).
- 165 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī (1984–5: XI, 284); Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 284).
- 166 We also encounter this connection of motifs elsewhere; cf. the tradition of Ibn Ishāq in Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 154 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 107) = aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1152 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 73).
- 167 Incidentally, the different traditions which make up this conglomerate can be found separately, but in close proximity to each other, in Ibn Ishāq (the *iqra*’ narration, the story about the greetings of the future Prophet by stones and trees, the Ḥadiḡah narration linked to the *ufuq* motif, the report about Ḥadiḡah’s conversion, the report about the introduction of the ablutions and the prayer ritual: Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151–8 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 105–13). This raises the suspicion that the composition of the conglomerate could have been inspired by a chapter in Ibn Ishāq’s work. Should our suspicions be correct, the conglomerate could not have been combined before the middle of the second/eighth century. But this does not mean that it does not contain traditions and motifs originating from ʿUrwah.
- 168 Cf. Buhl (1930: 136).
- 169 As Sprenger (1869: I, 340) assumes. The following scholars regard ʿĀʾiṣah as a possible or likely original informant: Watt (1953: 41) (but he qualifies his claim by stating that not all passages necessarily originated with her) and Lohmann (1968: 417–18), who observes: ‘In this case, we are probably not in a position to doubt the reported incident’.
- 170 Cf. Birkeland (1955).
- 171 Ibid. 21ff.
- 172 Aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 215–16, no. 1539).

- 173 Abū Nu‘aym (1950: 171).
- 174 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: III 11); aḏ-Ḍahabī (1963: I, 590).
- 175 ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī, d. 129/746–7 or slightly earlier; cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VI, 346).
- 176 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 276).
- 177 Cf. Ibn Sa‘d (1905–40: I/1, 130); above p. 51.
- 178 This is the opinion of Birkeland (1955: 23).
- 179 Aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 215–16, no. 1539). In Abū Nu‘aym’s version, the text is slightly different: ‘He then put a seal on my back, so that I felt the touch of the seal in my heart. He then said to me: “Read!” But I had never read something written. Also, I did not find what I was supposed to read. He then said (again): “Read!” I answered: “What shall I read/I do not read (*mā aqra‘u*)!” He then said: “Read in the name of your Lord who has created”, until he had finished five of its [scil. the *sūrah*’s] verses. I did not forget any (of this) anymore. He then weighed me against a man and I outweighed him’. Notice the (secondary?) reappearance of *mā aqra‘u* from LV I and LV III (cf. above, p. 59f.).
- 180 The terms *iqra‘* and *qara‘tu* must surely be understood in the sense of ‘read’; this follows from the subsequent use of the word *kitāb*.
- 181 Since the story of the greeting of the future Prophet by the trees and the stones occurs in this conglomerate, we also have reason to believe that in this case the redactor was familiar with Ibn Ishāq’s work, since Ibn Ishāq inserted this story between his two versions of the *iqra‘* narrative (cf. n. 167).
- 182 Sprenger (1869: I, 339).
- 183 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151–2 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 105ff.).
- 184 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1149 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 70ff.).
- 185 Ibn Ishāq (1978: 120ff.).
- 186 Cf. p. 61.
- 187 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 146); al-Fasawī (1981: II, 24 and III, 148).
- 188 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 65); al-Fasawī (1981: II, 24 and III, 148); Ibn Ḥibbān (1973–83, V, 232); cf. Juynboll (1994: 160ff. and esp. n. 17).
- 189 *Qāṣṣ ahl Makkah* according to Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 65); cf. also al-Fasawī (1981: II, 24).
- 190 *Bi-namaṭ min dībāq fī-hi kitāb*. Motzki (1993: 11) translates ‘with a brocade cloth in which a piece of writing [= the celestial original of the *sūrah*? G. S.] was [wrapped]’. His interpretation makes very good sense.
- 191 In Ibn Hišām’s version, the angel makes his request four times, three times in al-‘Uṭāridī’s version.
- 192 Only Ibn Hišām has this detail.
- 193 In aṭ-Ṭabarī’s text, Muḥammad replies *mā aqra‘u* the first time around and *mā ḏā aqra‘u* the second time. Ibn Hišām has *mā aqra‘u* the first three times and finally *mā ḏā aqra‘u*. In al-‘Uṭāridī, we read *mā aqra‘u* three times.
- 194 As Lohmann (1968: 425) aptly observes.
- 195 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1149 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 7ff.).
- 196 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 151–2) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 105ff.).
- 197 The most important variants are indicated in the notes to our outline of contents above.
- 198 Cf. p. 32.
- 199 This is the reason why the deletions were definitely carried out by Ibn Hišām and not by his teacher al-Bakkā‘ī (another potential candidate).
- 200 Al-‘Uṭāridī (1978: 121–2) = al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 147–8).
- 201 Al-‘Uṭāridī (1978: 121, around ll. 1–8).

- 202 We can safely ignore a short, two-line summary of the Wāqidī recension (in al-Balāḍurī n.d.: I, 110, no. 208). Here as well as in other cases (cf. pp. 93ff. and 97ff.), al-Wāqidī does not acknowledge that he knows the tradition from Ibn Ishāq. Instead, he inserts an invented or false transmitter between Wahb and himself. Juynboll labels such occurrences as ‘diving’ (scil. under the CL).
- 203 Von See (1983).
- 204 Ibid. 232.
- 205 Cf. p. 65.
- 206 Cf. p. 28.
- 207 Cf. Kister (1968: 225–6) and Lohmann (1968: 424–5) for the following remarks.
- 208 Cf. p. 61.
- 209 Cf. Bloch (1989: 97). Cf. also Kister (1965: 31): ‘coined formula of praise, current at that period’.
- 210 It recurs in the *Sīrah* (Ibn Hišām 1858–60: 246 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 171) and, referring to Abū Bakr, in al-Buḥārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī 1978: pt 10, 44, no. 2297). Cf. also von Stülpnagel (1956: 134) and Kister (1965: 31–2).
- 211 In the sense of the term *ḥadīṭ* in which it is used today; but cf. pp. 20 and 21 with n. 16, p. 25 with n. 80.
- 212 Finally, we should point out an interesting parallel between LV III and the short version of the Ibn Lahīrah recension (SV IV, cf. p. 55): the description of the angelic vision on the horizon (*ufuq* motif). On the basis of the resemblance, we can infer that the *ufuq* motif was at first more elaborate than in the extant az-Zuhrī < ‘Urwah recension. Az-Zuhrī was probably responsible for reducing its prominence.
- 213 Sprenger (1869: I, 399).
- 214 Nöldeke (1909–38: I, 79).
- 215 Cf. p. 67.
- 216 Sprenger (1869: I, 340).
- 217 Ibid. 339.
- 218 This has also been pointed out by Buhl (1930: 136).
- 219 Perhaps after a query by az-Zuhrī.
- 220 Incidentally, ‘raising’ an *isnād* which stops with ‘Urwah up to ‘Ā’iṣah is so self-evident and happens so often that any transmitter could have done it independently of az-Zuhrī. Cf. also von Stülpnagel (1956: 119).
- 221 Cf. Duri (1983: 25); Görke and Schoeler (2008: 264, 287–8).
- 222 On account of the *qiṣṣah*-like structure of the story Wahb transmitted from ‘Ubayd, I am, in this case, disinclined to follow Sprenger, who claims that ‘Urwah was Wahb’s immediate source. Should Sprenger be correct, we would have to assume that ‘Urwah kept most of the *qiṣṣah* elements in ‘Ubayd’s narration or that Wahb reintroduced them after their suppression by ‘Urwah. Both explanations appear unlikely to me.
- 223 Cf. n. 31.
- 224 Cf. Kister (1965: 32).
- 225 Its answer is interesting also from the point of view of later theological developments. Since Muḡammad’s illiteracy was upheld almost dogmatically later on, religious scholars preferred the version with the unambiguous reply *mā anā bi-qāri* (‘I am not one who will/is able to read’) in LV I; cf. e.g. Lohmann (1968: 427). In addition, the tradition had the advantage of the ‘good’ *isnād* leading back to ‘Ā’iṣah (this, however, also applies to LV II).
- 226 Al-Bayhaqī (1985: II, 139); for the ‘Uqayl transmission, cf. above, pp. 43 and 49.
- 227 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 434).

- 228 Al-Azraqī (1858: 427).
- 229 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VI, 34).
- 230 Cf. p. 46.
- 231 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī 1984–5: X, 403; aḡ-Ḍahabī (1963: IV, 265); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: VII, 2479).
- 232 On the interpretation of the exclamations *yā ayyuhā l-muddattīr* (sūrah 74: 1) and *yā ayyuhā l-muzzammil* (sūrah 73: 1), cf. Rubin (1993b).
- 233 Andrae (1912: 16).
- 234 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 235).
- 235 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 323–4, nos. 4922ff.); Muslim (1972: II, 207–8); al-Balāḡurī (n.d.: I, 107, no. 197); Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: III, 306); aḡ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1153) = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 73–4); aḡ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 235, no. 1688); Muḡāhid (1989: 682, art. *sūrat al-muddattīr*), etc.; cf. the Corpus, p. 127 (B.1).
- 236 Or ‘Abdallāh ibn Ibrāhīm; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: I, 117). This link occurs in one version (Ṣaybān) only.
- 237 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XII, 127).
- 238 Ibid. II, 37.
- 239 Juynboll (1994: 170–1); but cf. the remarks in Andrae (1912: 10–11, 16), of which Juynboll was unaware.
- 240 Cf. pp. 40 (no. 12), 43 and 47f., where the tradition is added (as is generally the case in the Ma‘mar transmission) to the *iqra’* narration (on the authority of ‘Urwah < ‘Ā’iṣah). The text is independently transmitted, e.g. by aḡ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 235, no. 1688 at the end) on the authority of Ṣāliḡ ibn Abī l-Aḡḡar; al-Buḡārī in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 325–6, nos. 4925–6), both on the authority of ‘Uqayl > al-Layṭ; Muslim (1972: II, 205–6) on the authority of Yūnus > ‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb and ‘Uqayl > al-Layṭ; aḡ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1155–6 = al-Ṭabarī 1988: 76 = 1321 AH: XXX, 78) on the authority of Yūnus > ‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb; Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: III, 325) on the authority of ‘Uqayl > al-Layṭ etc. On these and other versions, cf. the Corpus, p. 128f.
- 241 Apparently, Juynboll regards the preambles of both Yaḡyā’s ‘counter tradition’ and az-Zuhrī’s ‘counter-counter tradition’ as pure fiction or manipulations by the rival transmitters. In my opinion, however, only the formulations referring to the other tradition are ‘manipulated’, not the contents of the traditions. But it is beyond doubt that az-Zuhrī attempted to harmonize the two doctrines/traditions relating to the first revealed *sūrah*.
- 242 Only the Ma‘mar and Yūnus versions have the full annex; cf. above pp. 40 and 43.
- 243 The two terms were apparently regarded as synonymous. In most transmissions according to az-Zuhrī, the Prophet’s exclamation *zammilū-nī* is followed by *sūrah 74, yā ayyuhā l-muddattīr*. Cf. also Rubin (1993b).
- 244 Cf. p. 65.
- 245 Ibn Abī Ṣaybah (1966–83: x, 541).
- 246 al-Balāḡurī (n.d.: I, 110, no. 207).
- 247 Ibn Sa’d (1905–40: I/1, 130).
- 248 Aḡ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XXX, 139).
- 249 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 92).
- 250 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VIII, 26).
- 251 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 313, no. 3664).
- 252 We have no reason to doubt it; cf. above pp. 66 and also 59.
- 253 Sprenger (1869: I, 341).
- 254 Ibid. 34ff.

- 255 Juynboll (1994: 163–4); Rubin (1993a: 21ff.).
- 256 Ibn Abī Šaybah (1966–83: XIV, 292); aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1148 = aṭ-Ṭabarī 1988: 69–70) = 1321 AH: XXX, 139); al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 108, no. 200).
- 257 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: V, 222).
- 258 Ibid. IV, 172ff.
- 259 But note the difference Rubin (1993a: 223) pointed out.
- 260 The *taḥannuṭ* and *ufuq* motifs are entirely absent.
- 261 Cf. Juynboll (1994: 163).
- 262 Rubin (1993a: 223).
- 263 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 1, 54).
- 264 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 285); Jarrar (1989: 37–8, 76ff.).
- 265 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 257).
- 266 Ibid, X, 204.
- 267 Ibn Abī Šaybah (1966–83: XIV, 292, no. 18404); al-Balāḍurī (n.d.: I, 105–6, no. 193); Ibn Ishāq (1978: 192); as-Suhaylī (1967: II, 407); al-Wāḥidī (n.d.: 11–12).
- 268 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 283).
- 269 Ibn Sa’d (1905–40: VI, 71); Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VIII, 42).
- 270 This has already been pointed out by Sprenger (1869: I, 345).
- 271 Cf. p. 69.
- 272 Noth (1968: 294; the expression in square brackets on p. 283).
- 273 Ibid. 294.
- 274 Ibid. 283 also allowed for the latter possibility, i.e. that various motifs were taken out of one or more larger traditions and – now isolated – reused in other texts’.
- 275 Juynboll (1994: 163).
- 276 Rubin (1993a: 223).
- 277 This principle will be explained in greater detail and applied in the following chapter; cf. pp. 104, 106f., 111f.
- 278 E.g. Lohmann (1968: 431ff.); Watt (1953: esp. 47, 52).
- 279 Von Stülpnagel (1956: 134).
- 280 Cf. p. 3.
- 281 Bell (1934a: 15–16); Andrae (1912: 15); Paret (1980: 47).
- 282 We have no reason at all to include ‘Ā’iṣah in our list of the oldest, *more or less safely identifiable* informants for the story. On the contrary, there are strong reasons to suspect that her name was retroactively added to the *isnād* (i.e. the chain of transmitters was ‘raised’ back to include her) (cf. pp. 59 and also 51, 52). Not even Muslim *ḥadīṭ* scholars unanimously accepted her as the original informant for the story. According to a statement quoted by Ibn Ḥaḡar, an-Nawawī wrote in a commentary on the *ḥadīṭ*: ‘This (*ḥadīṭ*) belongs to the *marāsil* (traditions containing an incomplete *isnād*) of the Prophet’s companions, because ‘Ā’iṣah did not witness (literally: did not reach [in her lifetime]) these events, but she probably heard about them from the Prophet or a companion (!) ...’ Ibn Ḥaḡar, however, subsequently emphasizes that ‘Ā’iṣah must have heard the story from the Prophet himself, since the *ḥadīṭ* contains his direct speech (Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī 1978: pt 18, 370).
- 283 Vansina (1985: 160).
- 284 In Vansina (1985: 196), he comments: ‘Therefore oral traditions should be treated as hypotheses, and as the first hypothesis the modern scholar must test before he or she considers others. To consider them first means not to accept them literally, uncritically.’
- 285 Cf. Andrae (1912: 6ff.), who lists seven different *sūrah*s identified by tradition as the first revelation.

286 Even later on, we encounter, in addition to variants of the type which normally occur in written transmission, shortenings, redactional modifications of the text, etc. Cf. Landau-Tasseron (2004).

3 The issue of authenticity

- 1 Wansbrough (1978: 76ff.).
- 2 Juynboll (1994: 179ff.).
- 3 Spellberg (1994: 61–2).
- 4 Ibid. 80–3, Spellberg also considers the opinions of *ṣīṭī* authors about ‘Ā’iṣah and the *ḥadīṭ al-īfk*. Their reports are generally too late (the earliest date from the fourth/tenth century) to be discussed in this study. We should, however, note the following difference between *ṣunnī* and *ṣīṭī* positions: contrary to accepted *ṣunnī* opinion, *ṣīṭī* authors such as ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 307/919) maintain that *sūrah* 24: 11f. was not revealed about ‘Ā’iṣah, but about Muḥammad’s Coptic concubine Maryam. According to Spellberg, *ṣīṭīs* accepted the accusation of adultery levelled against ‘Ā’iṣah, but not the divine exculpation. She adds that this interpretation was not unanimous: Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd’s opinion e.g. agrees with *ṣunnī* views (cf. Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd 1959–64: IX, 190ff.).
- 5 Buhl (1930: 281–4).
- 6 Abbott (1985: 29–38).
- 7 Von Stülpnagel (1956: 95ff.).
- 8 Widengren (1958: 256).
- 9 The ‘form-critical’ method (*formkritische*, or *gattungskritische*, or *gattungsgeschichtliche Methode*) (as opposed to the ‘transmission historical method; *überlieferungsgeschichtliche Methode*; cf. p. 98f.) attempts to determine the formal and generic features of Old Testament texts and establish their ‘Sitz im Leben’ (historical context).
- 10 It is worth noting that Wansbrough interprets the version he considers the oldest (that of Ibn Iṣḥāq) to be the least developed and the version he considers the most recent (that of al-Buḥārī) to be the most highly developed!
- 11 Cf. p. 98f.
- 12 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 57). Compare our corpus, which, however, does not list as many versions.
- 13 He lists their *isnāds*; cf. pp. 83 and 86ff.
- 14 Cf. p. 99f. on the *isnād*.
- 15 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 116ff.). The plot of the story is identical in all complete versions reported on the authority of az-Zuhrī; cf. p. 83.
- 16 Incomplete versions can be found in Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 11, 64, no. 2637) (*Kitāb aṣ-ṣahādāt*, according to Yūnus); pt 12, 31, no. 2879 (*Kitāb al-ḡihād*, according to Yūnus); pt 15, 195, no. 4025 (*Kitāb al-maḡāzī*, according to Yūnus); pt 17, 249, no. 4690 (*Kitāb at-tafsīr*, according to Ṣāliḥ); pt 25, 39, no. 6662 (*Kitāb al-īmān*, according to Ṣāliḥ); pt 25, 61, no. 6679 (*Kitāb al-īmān*, according to Ṣāliḥ); pt 28, 109, no. 7369 (*Kitāb al-ī-tiṣām*, according to Ṣāliḥ); pt 28, 258, no. 7500 (*Kitāb at-tawḥīd*, according to Yūnus); pt 28, 317, no. 7545 (*Kitāb at-tawḥīd*, according to Yūnus). Cf. the Corpus, pp. 130ff.
- 17 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 11, 89ff., no. 2661).
- 18 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 93); Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VIII, 272).
- 19 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 57ff., no. 4750).

- 20 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 519); Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 395).
- 21 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 16, 3ff.).
- 22 He was said to be older than az-Zuhrī (b. 50/670 or a little later); Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 350).
- 23 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 116ff.).
- 24 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 19ff.).
- 25 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII 63ff.).
- 26 An-Nasā’ī (1990: II, 112, no. 380). He stops after section 13 of the outline above.
- 27 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 76).
- 28 Muslim (1972: XVII, 102ff.).
- 29 Ibid. 114.
- 30 We find one conspicuous amplification, possibly a case of dittography, in aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 64, pp. 20ff.), transmitted on the authority of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-A’lā < Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr < Ma’mar. In this version, ‘Ā’iṣah reports after her conversation with her mother Umm Rūmān (section 9 in our outline) – always in the same words – how she has spent days on end sleepless and in tears. Since we do not find this amplification in an-Nasā’ī (1990: II, 112), who also transmits on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Ṭawr, it is most likely a transmission error, originating in all probability with aṭ-Ṭabarī himself.
- 31 E.g. the version of Fulayḥ ibn Sulaymān (Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī 1978: pt 11, 89ff.; ‘Umar ibn Šabbah 1368 Š/1991: 311ff.) is conspicuous for quoting the *isnāds* of two other recensions of the *ḥadīṭ al-ijf* after reporting the text of the tradition according to az-Zuhrī. The first *isnād* leads to Hišām ibn ‘Urwah (< ‘Urwah), the second to al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr. Fulayḥ then claims that these two recensions contain ‘the same’ material (scil. as the Zuhrī recension). A prominent trait of Šāliḥ ibn Kaysān’s version (Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī 1978: pt 16, 3ff.; an-Nasā’ī n.d.: 39; cf. also Muslim 1972: XVII, 114) is the fact that he quotes additions (which he always marks as such) from another recension of the story, that of Hišām ibn ‘Urwah < ‘Urwah (cf. pp. 100–102). However, some of the transmitters of Šāliḥ’s version later removed the additions, apparently independently of each other; e.g. aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 87ff.); Abū Ya’lā al-Mawšilī (1986: VIII, 348ff., no. 4935; against VIII, 339ff., no. 4933).
- 32 Cf. p. 24f.
- 33 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 731ff. = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 493ff.).
- 34 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, pp. 1518ff. = al-Ṭabarī 1997: 57ff.; abridged in 1321 AH: XVIII, 66).
- 35 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 328ff.).
- 36 Ismā’īl ibn Ibrāhīm, d. 194/809–10; Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: I, 241).
- 37 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 205).
- 38 Ibid. V, 85.
- 39 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 284).
- 40 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XII, 466).
- 41 The bracketed numbers refer to the corresponding sections of the Zuhrī recension; cf. p. 82.
- 42 According to Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 75), this detail also appears in the version reported on the authority of Abū Uways < Hišām ibn ‘Urwah. It is, however, not to be found in the available printed texts of the Abū Uways version (aṭ-Ṭabarānī 1984–6: XXIII, 111–12, here 113 = al-Hayṭamī 1982: IX, 233).
- 43 Cf. p. 88f.

- 44 Cf. the second *isnād* on p. 83.
- 45 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 337).
- 46 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 12).
- 47 Abū Dāwūd (1950: IV, 226, no. 4475) (Muḥammad ibn Salamah < Ibn Ishāq); aḏ-Ḍahabī (1987: pt 2, *al-mağāzī*, p. 279) and al-Bayhaqī (1344–55 AH: VIII, 250) (Yūnus ibn Bukayr < Ibn Ishāq).
- 48 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VI, 15).
- 49 Ibid IX, 171.
- 50 Abū Dāwūd (1950: IV, 226, no. 4475).
- 51 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 736) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 497).
- 52 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 122); ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 46, no. 2016).
- 53 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: I, 137).
- 54 Ibid. IV, 395.
- 55 Ibid. II, 243.
- 56 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 338).
- 57 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–85: XI, 205).
- 58 Ibid.; ‘Abbād is the son of ‘Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr.
- 59 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 122). After this, the text explicitly points out: *wa-ḏakara ḥadīṯ al-ifk*, ‘And (then) he [scil. ‘Abbād] related the story of the slander’.
- 60 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 734) = Ibn Ishāq (1980: 496).
- 61 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 119).
- 62 On *tayammum*, cf. Muranyi (1975).
- 63 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 348).
- 64 Some fundamental considerations can be found in Noth (1973a: 40–1 = 1994: 40ff.). He points out that the *hiğrah* dating was first introduced under the caliph ‘Umar in 16/637 (or, according to some, 17 or 18). According to Noth, the majority of traditions on the early Islamic period was not dated or only placed in a relative chronological context. The inclusion of this material into a chronology based on the *hiğrah* system was not a concern of early historical tradition, but illustrates a later attempt at systematization.
- 65 Explicitly pointed out in Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 731 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 494).
- 66 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 725). According to Ibn Ḥaḡar, Mūsā ibn ‘Uqbah placed this raid in the year 5 AH; cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 15, 318). (Ibn Ḥaḡar corrects a variant date (4 AH) supplied by al-Buḡārī.) On the chronology of campaigns and battles during Muḥammad’s Medinese period, cf. Jones (1957: 251, 272–3, esp. 273) and more recently Schöller (1998: 215–29).
- 67 Discussed on pp. 100ff.
- 68 Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 731 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 493).
- 69 It is strange that in this case, Ibn Ishāq transmits not directly on the authority of his teacher az-Zuhrī, but indirectly through an unnamed person (cf. p. 26, with n. 95).
- 70 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 15, 319, before no. 4138); cf. also al-Bayhaqī (1985: IV, 63).
- 71 An-Nu‘mān ibn Rāšid also makes the connection in his own (dubious) Zuhrī version (single strand *isnād!*) of the scandal story: al-Bayhaqī (1985: IV, 63) = aḏ-Ḍahabī (1987: pt 2, 269). Cf. the Corpus, p. 135, C. 1.
- 72 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 97ff.; here 98).
- 73 ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abdallāh; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: V, 245); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: IV, 182).

- 74 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 111ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 232ff.); cf. above, pp. 105, 107(1).
- 75 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 131); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: VII, 71).
- 76 ‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 319); cf. p. 95f.
- 77 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 125ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 237ff.); cf. p. 107(2).
- 78 Al-Bazzār (2003–9: XIV, 334–5, no. 8011); aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XX:III, 129ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 23ff.); cf. p. 107(5).
- 79 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1879–1901: ser. 1, p. 1528 = al-Ṭabarī 1997: 67).
- 80 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VI, 384).
- 81 For him cf. the relevant article by Watt (in *EP*, VIII, 697–8).
- 82 Cf. p. 100f.
- 83 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 15, 319, and pt 18, 60).
- 84 For him cf. Watt (in *EP*, VIII, 697–8).
- 85 Cf. Jones (1957: 273).
- 86 Cf. p. 22 with n. 47.
- 87 Vansina (1985: 173–85).
- 88 Characteristically, Ibn Ishāq very rarely refers to his predecessors in chronological matters. Fück (1925: 38, n. 37) identifies only four places in the whole *Sīrah* in which he does so.
- 89 Cf. n. 64 and n. 66.
- 90 As Crone (1987: 224ff.) does.
- 91 Al-Wāqidī (1966: II, 426ff.).
- 92 The rest is not relevant for present purposes.
- 93 Ibn Ishāq (in section 11) lists Ḥammah instead of ‘Abdallāh.
- 94 Cf. p. 88f.
- 95 On p. 89.
- 96 Al-Wāqidī’s student Ibn Sa’d, who quotes an abridged version (only five lines) of his teacher’s narration in his very short account of the raid against the Banū l-Muṣṭaliq (Ibn Sa’d 1905–40: II/1, 46–7), follows him on this point; others have echoed his version of events (cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī 1978: pt 2, 250ff.). The implausibility of losing a necklace twice during the same raid was already noticed by observant Muslim *ḥadīth* scholars; cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī 1978: pt 2, 250. For a more recent point of view cf. Görke and Schoeler (2008: 157–9).
- 97 Juynboll (1994: 184) has already remarked upon the similarities between al-Wāqidī’s wording of the *ifk* stories and that of the *Sīrah* (Ibn Hiṣām’s recension of Ibn Ishāq’s work) and opined that ‘borrowing’ was a distinct possibility. Remarkably, he arrived at this result on the basis of his *isnād* analysis.
- 98 For the second tradition, cf. p. 107(2) with n. 171.
- 99 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 131); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: VII, 71).
- 100 ‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 318ff.); cf. above, p. 99f.
- 101 It is reported that the Prophet captured Ḡuwayrīyah during this raid; that Ṣafwān was part of the army’s rearguard; that Zayd ibn Ḥarīṭah and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, after hearing the defamatory rumour, allegedly said: ‘This is a tremendous calumny’ (*ḥādā buhtān ‘azīm*) (*sūrah* 24: 12), etc.
- 102 Al-Wāqidī (1966: 430) and al-Muwaqqarī in ‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 320).
- 103 On the possible origin of this expression, cf. p. 108 with n. 194.
- 104 Al-Wāqidī (1966: 429) and al-Muwaqqarī in ‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 321).
- 105 Al-Wāqidī (1966: 430) and al-Muwaqqarī in ‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 320).

- 106 Cf. p. 88.
- 107 Al-Wāqidī ignores the respective expression in Hišām ibn ‘Urwah’s version: ‘I only know about ‘Ā’iṣah what the goldsmith knows about the choicest gold’ (cf. p. 102); he does not seem to know his recension at all.
- 108 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 118ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 230ff.). On this tradition, which Muslim *ḥadīth* criticism already suspected on account of its ‘weak’ transmitter Abū Sa’īd al-Baqqāl, cf. p. 107(4).
- 109 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 124ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 237ff.). This tradition was also – rightly – dismissed by *ḥadīth* scholars: its transmitter Ismā’īl ibn Yahyā at-Taymī was deemed to be a ‘liar’.
- 110 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 127).
- 111 Al-Wāqidī (1966: 431).
- 112 Ibid. 430.
- 113 Al-Wāqidī (1882: 12–13).
- 114 Horovitz (1898: 9ff.).
- 115 Crone (1987: 225).
- 116 Cf. p. 80.
- 117 Cf. Duri (1957: 8): ‘Zuhrī’s traditions are generally sober factual accounts given in a simple, fairly candid, and concise way’.
- 118 Cf. p. 38, n. 7.
- 119 Juynboll (1994: 155; 1992: 688–9).
- 120 Cf. Wüstenfeld, in the introduction to his *Sīrah* edn (Ibn Hišām 1858–60: II, p. lviii). For ‘collective’ *isnāds* see Ibn Hišām (1858–60: 263, 428, 548, 555, 669, 725, 731, 893–4 = Ibn Ishāq 1980: 181, 290, 364–5, 370, 450, 490, 494, 602).
- 121 This argument was already put forward by Juynboll (1992: 689).
- 122 Including ‘Urwah’s letter to ‘Abd al-Malik, which was also transmitted via Hišām ibn ‘Urwah; cf. p. 103f.
- 123 Ḥammād ibn Usāmah (Kūfah); Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: III, 3); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: I, 558). His version and that of Abū Usāmah’s were the most frequently transmitted of the Hišām versions. Cf. the Corpus, p. 133.
- 124 Baṣrah; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: III, 11); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: I, 590).
- 125 Kūfah; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5, XI, 382); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: IV, 477).
- 126 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 110).
- 127 Wāsiṭ; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 185); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: IV, 376).
- 128 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 58ff.). One of them, the Abū Uways version, is definitely not authentic; cf. p. 105.
- 129 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 97ff., no. 4757) (Abū Usāmah version).
- 130 Muslim (1972: XVII, 114ff.) (Abū Usāmah version, abridged).
- 131 At-Tirmidī (1983: V, 13ff.) (Abū Usāmah version). At-Tirmidī, after quoting Hišām ibn ‘Urwah’s text in its entirety, only points to the existence of the Zuhrī recension and adds that Zuhrī’s recension was longer and more complete than Hišām’s.
- 132 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 66–7) (Abū Usāmah version), also in abridged form, ibid. 62).
- 133 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 59–60 (Abū Usāmah version)).
- 134 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 325 (Ḥammād ibn Salamah version)).
- 135 Aḍ-Ḍahabī (1987: pt 2, 270ff.).
- 136 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 106ff. (Ḥammād ibn Salamah version) and 108ff. (Abū Usāmah version)).

- 137 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 97ff., no. 4757). It is almost identical to at-Tirmidī’s version (at-Tirmidī 1983: V, 13ff.); Muslim abridges the text.
- 138 One of az-Zuhrī’s transmitters, Ṣāliḥ ibn Kaysān, regarded these and other additional details in the Hišām recension as important enough to add them to the text of his Zuhrī recension, identifying ‘Urwah as the source of this material; cf. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 16, 3ff, no. 4141; here 4 and 7); Muslim (1972: XVII, 114 (abridged)); an-Nasā’ī (n.d.: 39ff.). Cf. n. 31.
- 139 The biographical literature provides a possible explanation: while az-Zuhrī is reported to have used written records and even loaned them to his students for copying, we find no such information about Hišām.
- 140 Since we have only one instance of the Ibn Bukayr version in our Corpus (in aḏ-Ḍahabī’s *Ta’rīḥ al-Islām*, a late source), textual lacunae and abridgements in the process of later written transmission could very well be the reason for some or all of the missing motifs.
- 141 (1a) means the first sentence of the *ḥuṭbah* motif.
- 142 Yet, Ḥammād separates the first sentence of the *ḥuṭbah* motif (1a) from the rest and places it at the beginning of his tradition (even before the account of the questioning of the maid). This could mean that Abū Usāmah’s sequence, which starts with the *ḥuṭbah*, was the original arrangement.
- 143 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 108).
- 144 That is, the chronologically earlier questioning and what follows from it are appended *after* the revelation motif.
- 145 Cf. the possible explanation in n. 140.
- 146 Cf. n. 122.
- 147 On the transmission of written documents (treaties and official letters), which the compilers had normally not seen themselves (e.g. in archives), but which they usually received like normal traditions through the lecture system, cf. Schoeler (2006: 83 = 1992a: 34–5); Noth (1973a: 60ff., esp. 68 and 71ff. = 1994: 62ff., esp. 72–3, 76ff.).
- 148 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: I, 87); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: I, 390).
- 149 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 61).
- 150 Somewhat later (ibid. 62), aṭ-Ṭabarī quotes an abridged Hišām ibn ‘Urwah version on the authority of Abū Usāmah and finally (ibid. 66), the complete text of that version.
- 151 Cf. von Stülpnagel (1956: 95).
- 152 ‘Abd ar-Razzāq (1991: II, 44); ‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 337); aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 97ff.).
- 153 In ‘Umar ibn Ṣabbah (1368 Š/1991: 326); in aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 108 – he puts the phrase in square brackets).
- 154 Cf. p. 21.
- 155 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 111ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, pp. 232ff.).
- 156 ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Abdallāh, d. 167/783–4; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–85: V, 245); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: IV, 182).
- 157 On p. 102.
- 158 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 67–8); cf. also above, p. 108(6).
- 159 The story of the lost necklace also occurs in the Hišām ibn ‘Urwah tradition. Here, however, it is linked with the revelation of the sand ablation verse (*tayammum*), *sūrah* 4:43 and 5:6 and seems originally to have been narrated about ‘Urwah’s mother Asmā’ rather than ‘Ā’īshah but later ‘transferred’ to the latter. Cf. Görke and Schoeler

- (2008: 157ff., 162). The motif of the loss of the necklace might then have been recycled in the slander story as a welcome explanation for the delay which led to ‘Ā’iṣah’s return to Medina in the company of Ṣafwān. This development must have taken place at a very early stage of the transmission.
- 160 Az-Zuhrī (1980: 119).
- 161 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 18, 98, no. 4757).
- 162 The Qur’ānic verses linked by tradition to the *ḥadīṭ al-ifk*, *sūrah* 24: 11ff, cannot have been the seed of the tradition (for the purposes of the ‘Lammens-position’; cf. p. 3). It would be absurd to claim that an elaborate story involving the denunciation and rehabilitation by God of the Prophet’s favourite wife could have been developed out of the cryptic allusions to nameless people made by these verses.
- 163 Cf. p. 104f.
- 164 We should keep in mind that Muslim *ḥadīṭ* scholars already recognized some of these traditions as inauthentic (nos. 2, 3, 4); cf. the notes on the traditions listed on pp. 107–109.
- 165 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 111ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 232ff.); on this tradition cf. also above, p. 105.
- 166 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 124ff.) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 237ff.).
- 167 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: V, 287).
- 168 Aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: I, 253); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: I, 297); al-Hayṭamī, author of the *Maḡma‘*, who quotes the tradition (cf. n. 166), calls him a ‘liar’ (*kaḍḍāb*) (p. 240), i.e. he accuses him of forging the *ḥadīṭ*.
- 169 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 270).
- 170 Ibid. X, 368.
- 171 Cf. p. 95. Among the shared motifs is e.g. the inclusion of Umm Salamah. This tradition embellishes the original Zuhrī version even more than the Muwaqqarī version, adding a great deal of inauthentic and invented narrative padding; cf. also p. 96f.
- 172 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 123–4); al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 236–7).
- 173 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 25); Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: V, 242).
- 174 For Ismā’īl ibn Yaḥyā, see *ibid.* I, 293. For his father Yaḥyā (d. 179/795–6 or 172/788–9) see Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IX, 196). Al-Hayṭamī, who quotes the tradition in his *Maḡma‘* (al-Hayṭamī 1982: IX, 236–7) calls Ismā’īl (or his father?) *matrūk*, ‘rejected’ (i.e. suspected of falsehood), and seems to regard him as the source of the forgery.
- 175 Al-Hayṭamī (1982: IV, 137).
- 176 That of Ḥuṣayn, cf. p. 109.
- 177 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 118ff.); al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 230–1).
- 178 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: I, 299).
- 179 Ibid. VI, 238.
- 180 Abū Sa’īd (Sa’d) Sa’īd (Sa’d) ibn al-Marzubān; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 70). Quoting the tradition in his *Maḡma‘* (cf. above, n. 177), al-Hayṭamī calls him *ḍa’īf*, ‘weak’, and seems to regard him as the forger.
- 181 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VI, 127).
- 182 We also find an echo of the Ḥuṣayn recension (cf. pp. 109–111): ‘Ā’iṣah learns about the accusations apparently in her own house and her mother throws clothes over her. However, the most characteristic motif of the Ḥuṣayn recension, the fainting fit, is absent from this tradition.
- 183 Al-Bazzār (2003–9: XIV, 334–5, no. 8011); aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 129) (shortened); al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 230).

- 184 Not identified.
- 185 Not identified.
- 186 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XII, 127).
- 187 Aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: XVIII, 67–8).
- 188 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 247).
- 189 Ibid. IV, 109.
- 190 Ibid. IX, 64.
- 191 Ibid. 333.
- 192 Ibid. XI, 218.
- 193 Cf. p. 105.
- 194 A parallel statement of the maid can be found in al-Muwaqqarī’s ‘problematic’ Zuhrī version and, derived from it, in al-Wāqidī (cf. above, p. 95). It is possible that al-Muwaqqarī received his formulation from the ‘Alqamah tradition discussed above. Its originator might have obtained it by modifying the maid’s statement as found in the Hišām ibn ‘Urwah recension (‘I only know about ‘Ā’iṣah what the goldsmith knows about the choicest gold’; cf. p. 102).
- 195 Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (1979–87: III, 187ff.).
- 196 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 36).
- 197 We merely read: ‘She remembered (in her palanquin) a piece of jewelry she owned and which she had left in the camp’, etc. (p. 188).
- 198 Interestingly, we do *not* find it in al-Muwaqqarī’s tradition, which in other aspects closely resembles the Ibn ‘Umar version; cf. p. 95.
- 199 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 339–40) = ‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb (1993: pt 1, fol. 22a, 13–33b, 1).
- 200 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 466); ‘Abdallāh ibn Wahb (1992a).
- 201 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 38).
- 202 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: III, 341).
- 203 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 340). Cf. also aṭ-Ṭabarī (1321 AH: V, 114).
- 204 Cf. Ibn Ishāq’s version on p. 85(17).
- 205 Trans. by A. J. Arberry.
- 206 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 13, 166, no. 3388) (according to Ibn Fuḡayl); pt 16, 9–10, no. 4143 (according to Abū ‘Awānah); pt 17, 249–50, no. 4691 (according to ‘Abū ‘Awānah, abridged); pt 18, 91, no. 4751 (according to Sulaymān ibn Kaṭīr).
- 207 aṭ-Ṭayālīsī (1321 AH: 231–2) (according to Abū ‘Awānah).
- 208 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 367–8) (in two versions: according to Abū Ġa’far ar-Rāzī and ‘Alī ibn ‘Āṣim). Cf. also aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 122) (according to Suwayd ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz).
- 209 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: X, 296).
- 210 al-Waḍḍāḥ ibn ‘Abdallāh, d. 175/791–2 or a year later; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: XI, 103); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: IV, 334).
- 211 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: II, 328); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: I, 551); Ibn ‘Adī (1988: II, 397).
- 212 Šaḡīq ibn Salamah, d. after 82/701; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: IV, 317).
- 213 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: X, 100).
- 214 *Sūrah* 12: 18, trans. by A. J. Arberry.
- 215 Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 16, 9–10, no. 4143). Cf. the Corpus, pp. 134–5.
- 216 According to Ibn Ḥaḡar, ‘We do not know anybody who transmits this tradition on the authority of Abū Wā’il except Ḥuṣayn’; Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 16, 9–10) (quoting al-Ḥaṭīb [al-Baḡdādī?]).

- 217 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1978: pt 16, 10).
- 218 Ibn Ḥanbal (1313 AH: VI, 367–8).
- 219 In aṭ-Ṭayālīsī’s text, the first sentence is absent. This could, however, be an error in the manuscript tradition of his *Musnad*. Al-Buḥārī has preserved a more extensive version of the text.
- 220 Sezgin (1967–2007: I, 96–7).
- 221 Schoeler (2006: 31 with additions on p. 43 = 1985: 206–7).
- 222 ‘Umar ibn Šabbah (1368 Š/1991: 323ff.) = aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 117–18). The tradition starts with the Umm Miṣṭaḥ episode.
- 223 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 83); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: III, 27).
- 224 Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5, III, 123); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: I, 653).
- 225 Ibn Buğrah or ibn Nağdah; Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: X, 256); aḍ-Ḍahabī (1963: IV, 176).
- 226 Ibn ‘Adī (1988: V, 357–8) = Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī (1984–5: VII, 84).
- 227 Aṭ-Ṭabarānī (1984–6: XXIII, 123–4) = al-Hayṭamī (1982: IX, 236–7).
- 228 Cf. p. 107(3). This tradition, too, is rejected by Muslim *ḥadīṭ* scholars: it contains a transmitter (probably Yaḥyā ibn Salamah ibn Kahīl; cf. n. 174) who is characterized as ‘rejected’ (*matrūk*).
- 229 Cf. the remarks above on p. 107(4) (with n. 182) on a further apocryphal tradition borrowing a motif from the Ḥuṣayn recension.
- 230 For our definition of authenticity cf. p. 1f.
- 231 As we have seen (p. 107(2, 3)), among others, the *ḥadīṭ* ‘according to Ibn ‘Abbās’ and another one ‘according to Ibn ‘Umar’ are easily recognized as imitations of the Zuhri version, since they contain the same motifs (beginning with the drawing of lots) in the same sequence, but supplement them with various fantastic additions.
- 232 Vansina (1985: 5).
- 233 Röhrich (1988: 90).
- 234 Vansina (1985: 192–3). In our case, we are in a position to reconstruct a version of the story approximately as it was told by a family member (‘Urwah) one generation after the events (cf. p. 105).
- 235 Vansina (1985: 107).
- 236 This debate dates back to the first quarter of the previous century; cf. p. 3f. Nöldeke (1914) marshals a number of good arguments against Lammens’ excessive scepticism.
- 237 In his *Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz* (1991b) (= *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 2002), Motzki arrived at a similar result, but by a different route.
- 238 Cf. Vansina (1985: 64–5).
- 239 *Ibid.* 5.
- 240 Vansina explains that ‘[s]election has not yet operated much, reinterpretation has not proceeded very far, relative chronology ... is still good, and sources have not yet become common to large numbers of people, so that a certain amount of independence still exists’ (*ibid.* 192–3).
- 241 Nöldeke (1914: 163) provides two arguments in favour of the historicity of the so-called first *hiğrah*, the flight of numerous of Muḥammad’s early adherents to Abyssinia: the reports in question are compatible with what we know about the situation in contemporary Abyssinia; furthermore, they contain Ethiopian terms. For a more recent point of view cf. Görke and Schoeler (2008: 76–7).
- 242 Cf. Vansina (1985: 107).

Afterword

- 1 After much further research, we can now refine Paret's finding: the transmission line Ma'mar < al-Zuhrī < 'Urwah is preferable to Ibn Ishāq < al-Zuhrī < 'Urwah.
- 2 See pp. 15–19.
- 3 Something Peters and Robinson – the latter generally also aware of research published in languages other than English – appear to have lost sight of. Some exponents of extreme scepticism such as Ibn Warraq and Nevo/Koren are not even aware of the existence of this method and the studies which present and test it. It is unclear whether their neglect stems from an inability to read German, or an inability to answer the challenge to their scepticism posed by this method, or both.
- 4 Berg (1999), Calasso (1996), Gilliot (1998), Görke (2001), Heine (1998) Lecker (1999), Rubin (1997), Tottoli (1998), Scheiner (2005). This new edition incorporates the criticisms and suggestions of various reviewers, especially Berg, Gilliot, Lecker and Rubin. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.
- 5 Schoeler (2002b).
- 6 Berg (1999: 17).
- 7 Görke (2003b).
- 8 Rubin (1997).
- 9 See p. 51f.
- 10 Ibn Sa'd (1905–40: I/1, 130). It is difficult to decide whether the narrators of the two similar traditions worked with a shared pool of motifs and combined them independently or whether 'Ammār depended on 'Urwah's version (the reverse seems unlikely to me; Ibn 'Abbās is, unlike 'Urwah, a 'mythical' figure!).
- 11 See pp. 52–4.
- 12 See now Görke and Schoeler (2008: 27–32 and esp. 35–6).
- 13 Görke (2000).
- 14 Görke and Schoeler (2005).
- 15 Görke and Schoeler (2008).
- 16 E.g. Ibid. 121–2, 142–3, 248, 254, 272.
- 17 Ibid. 253–4.
- 18 Ibid. 256.
- 19 Paret (1954).
- 20 This dialogue, a rejoinder to the dialogue 'The nature of literary evidence: A dialogue on methodology' in Ibn Warraq (2000a: 38–43), is modelled on the fundamental personal relationship in Islamic educational practice, that between the master (the *shaykh*) and the disciple (the *ṭālib*).
- 21 Cf. Ibn Warraq (2000a: 40).
- 22 See p. 61f.
- 23 Crone (1980: 202, n. 10).
- 24 Cf. Motzki (1991a). Cf. also p. 15 with n. 181.
- 25 Görke and Schoeler (2008: 126–30).
- 26 Ibid. 269.
- 27 Ibid. 78–124, 186–244.

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